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THE APOSTLES:

CONTAINING

THEIR HISTORY TO THE END OF THEIR LIVES, WITH
BRIEF NOTICES OF THEIR WRITINGS.

"And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning."

JOHN xv. 27.



LONDON:

THE RELIGIOUS TRACT SOCIETY;

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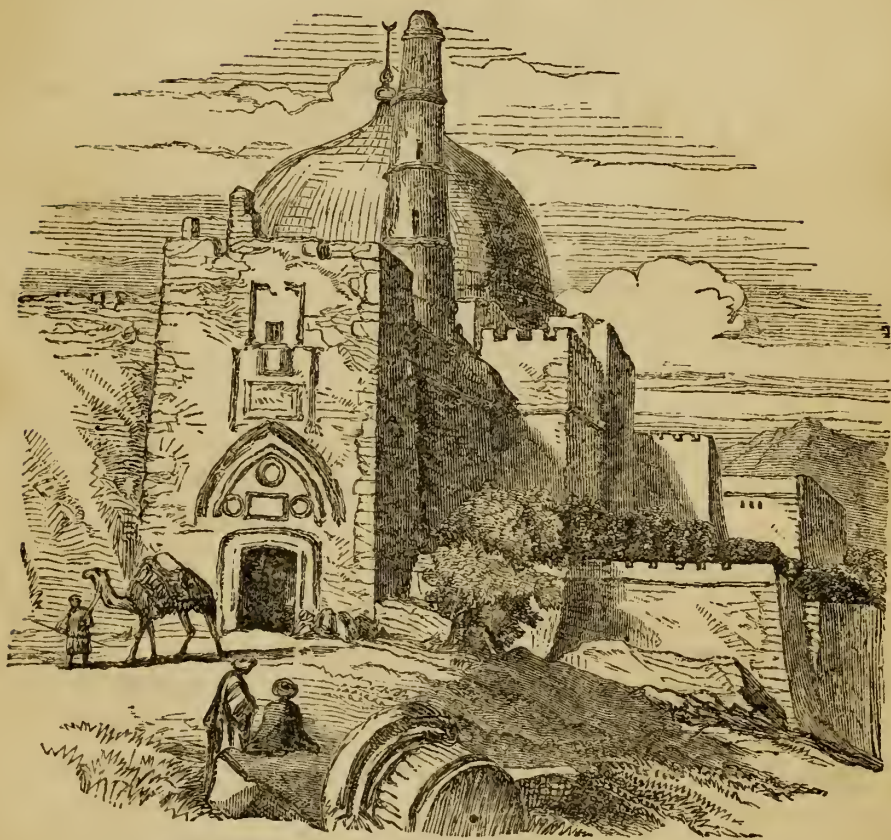
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THE APOSTLES.



THE GATE OF EPHRAIM, MODERN JERUSALEM.

INTRODUCTION.

IN the sacred Scriptures, the account of the earthly life of our blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, is followed by that of his immediate associates and disciples. As in the Old Testament, after the lives of Moses and Joshua, the result of their labour is shown, in the history of the people whom they had governed, and among whom their laws

continued to exist, so the principles of the gospel, and its effects upon the hearts of sinners, in every variety of character and situation, are brought forward in the lives and writings of the apostles of the Saviour. He was himself the great "Apostle and High Priest of our profession," Heb. iii. 1; the great Prophet foretold—that Teacher from above, whom Jewish prophets had predicted, and of whom even heathen idolaters had some faint expectation and desire. By a comparison with his life and doctrine, all who profess to believe in his name must be tried; and there is not only a full record of these given, but, for the guidance of the Christian church in later times, some events connected with its first establishment are also recorded, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Both under the Old and New Testament dispensations there was a blessing resting on those who heard the word of God and kept it—though while earthly prosperity is chiefly promised under the law, the consolations of the gospel are most felt in seasons of adversity.

Our Saviour, it has been truly remarked, "did not leave the world without giving his followers something to do—something at once pleasant, and useful, and ennobling. It is pleasant, because it interests all the feelings of the heart, and carries the soul on to peaceful, to rich enjoyments, of the very highest character. It is useful, because it seeks directly the highest good, aiming at happiness, present and future, and attaching the proper share of importance to every means of attaining it. It is ennobling, for it sinks all the base passions of selfishness and sin; it breaks over the barriers and limits of time and sense, and expands the views and widens the field of effort. It raises man almost out of the sphere of human action, and gives an employment eternal in duration, and unbounded in the wide-spread extension of his aims." This employment was directed in the words of Christ, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature;" and his parting promise was, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." The lives and histories of the first Christian teachers show their obedience to this command, and the fulfilment of this promise.

The humble character of St. Luke, who was the writer of the book called the Acts of the Apostles, is shown by his silence as to himself, and to any labours in which he took a part. A modern writer thus refers to him: "Who among us, after having shared, during ten years, the labours of St. Paul, his perils, imprisonments, preachings, and prophetic gifts, could have penned the history of twenty-two years of such a life, without saying a word of himself, and without making known to others, otherwise than by a change of the personal pronoun, Acts xvi. 10, that from Troas to Jerusalem and Cæsarea, and from thence to Malta, and on to Rome, he had been the suffering, faithful, and indefatigable companion of the apostle? It must be learned from the pen of St. Paul himself, who in his last imprisonment thus writes to Timothy, 'Only Luke is with me,' 2 Tim. iv. 11, 16; Philem. 24; Col. iv. 14. Holy and heavenly moderation! humble and noble silence! The Divine Spirit alone could have taught it.

"Where, among all uninspired historians, could you find a man who would have written the Acts of the Apostles in the manner St. Luke has done? Who would have known how to condense into thirty pages the history of thirty of the brightest years of Christianity, from the ascension of the Son of man into heaven, to the imprisonment of St. Paul in the capital of the Roman world? Incomparable history! At once how concise and yet extensive! What is there that is not found in it? Sermons to Jews, to Greeks, before tribunals, in the Areopagus, the Sanhedrim, in the public places and synagogues, before pro-consuls and kings,—delightful descriptions of the primitive church,—the miraculous and vividly-depicted scenes of her history,—the interposition of angels to deliver, to warn, and punish,—controversies and divisions in Christian assemblies,—new institutions in the church,—the history of a first council, and its synodical epistle,—comments on Scripture,—accounts of heresies,—solemn and terrible judgments of God,—appearances of the Lord in the way, in the temple, and in the prison,—details of conversions, often miraculous, and surprisingly varied—such as those of Eneas, the eunuch, the centurion Cornelius,

the Roman jailer, the pro-consul, Lydia, Apollos, and that of a multitude at Jerusalem, without mentioning those workings that are apparent in the emotions of king Agrippa and others. We also read of missionary enterprises,—of cases of conscience,—disputes between brethren and apostles, and the triumph of love over all,—persecutions under every form,—deliverances, at one time by a youth, at another by an angel, by heathen magistrates, and idolatrous soldiers,—tempests and shipwrecks, whose accurate details still delight the mariners of our own day. Such a book of ecclesiastical history the people of God required. True it is, and we again repeat it, it is not thus that mere men write history.”

Bickersteth says, “The following outline of some characteristics recorded of the early Christians may serve to show what is the true religion of the gospel,” whilst the defects among them are mentioned with the same impartiality :—

1. Dispositions towards God and Christ.

Deep impressions of their sinfulness and danger, Acts ii. 37; ix. 6; xvi. 29, 30.

A complete and entire change after conversion, 1 Cor. vi. 9, 11; Eph. ii. 5, 6.

Faith in Christ, Col. i. 3; 1 Thess. i. 3; 2 Thess. i. 3.

Fear, love, and hope towards God, Acts ix. 31; Rom. v. 5; 1 Thess. i. 3.

Peace, joy, and thankfulness towards God, Rom. v. 1, 11; Acts ii. 47; Eph. v. 19.

Love to the Saviour, 1 Cor. xvi. 22; 2 Cor. v. 14.

2. Attention to the ordinances of God and the means of grace.

Joy and reverence in receiving the gospel, Acts ii. 41, 46, 47; viii. 8; 1 Thess. ii. 13.

Diligent study of the Scriptures, Acts xvii. 11.

Private devotion, and social worship, Acts ii. 42; x. 9; xvi. 25.

Public worship, Acts iii. 1; xx. 7; early and late, Acts xii. 12; xx. 7.

Prayers for enemies, Acts vii. 60.

3. Tempers and conduct towards their fellow-creatures.

Regard for their ministers, Gal. iv. 14; Acts xx. 38; xii. 5; Phil. ii. 25; iv. 10—16.

Love of ministers to their people, 2 Cor. vi. 11.

Love to all the brethren, 1 Thess. iv. 9, 10; Eph. i. 15; Heb. xiii. 1; 1 Pet. i. 22.

Relief to those in want, Acts xi. 29; Rom. xv. 26; 1 Cor. xvi. 1; 2 Cor. viii. 2, 3; Philem. 7; 3 John 6; Acts ii. 45; 2 Thess. i. 3.

Great unanimity and union, Acts ii. 45; iv. 32, 34.

Diligence in spreading religion, Acts viii. 4, 30.

Separation from the wicked, 1 Cor. v. 11; 2 Thess. iii. 6—14.

4. Conduct as to themselves.

Sober deportment, 1 Pet. iv. 4.

Deep humility and a sense of their own sin, Rom. vii.; Eph. ii. 8; 1 Tim. i. 13, 15.

Patience and joy in affliction, 2 Thess. i. 4; Heb. x. 34; Acts xiii. 52; Rom. v. 3.

Willingness to die, and joy in the prospect of eternity, Phil. i. 23; 2 Cor. v. 1, 2.

Suffering for Christ's sake, Acts v. 40; vii. 58; viii. 1; xii. 2; xiii. 50; xiv. 22; xvi. 23; 2 Thess. i. 4.

Thus "the primitive Christians were bright examples to succeeding ages. This lovely picture might have been extended, but the above will suffice. Blots there were indeed; but it may be safely said, that this was the general character of the first Christians. They were the glory of their ministers, who could appeal to their lives to prove the power of the gospel."

Mark the soft falling snow,
And the diffusive rain,
To heaven, from whence they fell,
They turn not back again;
But water earth through every pore,
And call forth all her secret store.

So saith the God of grace:
My gospel shall descend,
Almighty to effect
The purpose I intend;
Millions of souls shall feel its power,
And bear it down to millions more.



CHAPTER I.

EARLY DAYS AFTER THE RESURRECTION—MIRACLES —ANANIAS AND SAPPHIRA—STEPHEN.

WHEN the light of the sun is withdrawn, the beams of the moon reflect its splendour, and cheer the scene which would otherwise be lost in gloom. Thus the true Christian is called to let his light shine before men in the absence of his risen Lord, while he is waiting for the dawning of the perfect day that shall come hereafter. It is pleasing to consider how this precept was obeyed by the first disciples of our blessed Lord, as they are described in that portion of Scripture called the Acts of the Apostles. This is the only record of the primitive church which is unmixed with vain and superstitious traditions; and considered merely as a history, it is full of interest. Henry Martyn, before his conversion, once studied it on this account: he was afterwards enabled, in some degree, to imitate the apostles, in their faith, love, and zeal for the cause of Christ.

Luke the evangelist begins this book, as he did his Gospel, with an address to his friend Theophilus, who seems to have been a pious ruler or governor, under the

Roman emperor. He then proceeds to detail the last interview of the apostles with their Divine Master; their mistaken notions of a temporal kingdom; and the direction they received to wait awhile at Jerusalem, in the patient expectation of his promised gift: "While he blessed them, he was parted from them," and "a cloud received him out of their sight." Encouraged, however, by a heavenly message from two angels, they returned to Jerusalem, and spent the next ten days chiefly in private and social prayer, together with the earthly relatives of Jesus, and a few others of his sincere followers.

The state of their minds can be more easily imagined than described. "No man can say that Jesus is Lord, but by the Holy Ghost:" therefore, they who had left all to follow him, must have received some portion of that Divine teaching which alone can guide and fix the wandering heart. But how little progress had they made in spiritual things! How should they, poor and unlettered fishermen, and even publicans, undertake the work of instructing and converting the world? How could they, dull and slow of heart to believe, impress on others the truths which they did but lately begin to understand? Thus, at all times, the weak things of this world are chosen by God to confound the mighty. But the day of small things must not be despised, for when believers most feel their own weakness, they are the most enabled to rely on the all-sufficiency of God. The same almighty wisdom and mercy which delivered Israel from Egypt, by a mighty hand and stretched out arm, was exercised as surely, but more gradually, in the formation and support of the early Christian church.

The number of disciples that assembled at Jerusalem was about one hundred and twenty. The twelve apostles, and probably most of the seventy disciples, were included in this number; while in Galilee, and elsewhere in Palestine, there were five hundred followers of Jesus, 1 Cor. xv. 6. Such were the small beginnings of Christianity. Knowing their need of strength from above, the apostles and their companions were earnest in prayer: doubtless they were also diligent in searching the Scriptures, where they would find

much to testify of Jesus, both in the Prophets and in the Psalms. Thus Peter alludes, Acts i. 13—21, to a passage spoken by David, in the spirit of prophecy, as applying to Judas the traitor. There is nothing here, or in any part of Scripture, to support the Romish error respecting the supremacy of Peter; indeed, the very mode of his address, “Men and brethren,” was an expression denoting equality, never used by our blessed Lord when on earth.

The successor to Judas was appointed by lot, the eleven having been chosen by the Lord: this was a right case in which to seek for the Divine interposition, widely different from the idle spirit in which recourse is sometimes had to chance, as it is wrongly called. Two constant hearers of Jesus were selected. Calvin observes, that the surnames of Joseph Barsabas, meaning the son of rest or of an oath, and Justus, or the just, would seem to imply that his brethren expected more from him than from Matthias; if so, the sequel showed that the Lord seeth not as man seeth. Matthias was numbered with the eleven, and shared in their cares and duties, which are detailed in the following chapters. Little more is known of Matthias. Lightfoot observes that his name signified the same with Nathanael, John i. 47. The traditions respecting him vary so much, that it is impossible to ascertain the truth. Some describe him as preaching in Macedonia, others in Cappadocia; others say that he was martyred in Galilee, under the high priest Ananias. He did not appoint himself to his office, but was called by his brethren, and chosen by God. Numerous fanciful reasons have been given for the number of twelve apostles being appointed. They have been compared to the twelve spies sent into the land of Canaan; the twelve stones of Aaron's breastplate, or bells on his garment; the twelve fountains of Elisha; and the twelve stones set up in Jordan. Other writers, with less trifling, have compared them to the twelve patriarchs, or heads of tribes, in ancient Israel. But it is useless to pry into what is not revealed. The word apostle signifies a missionary, or one sent; it is not always limited to these first preachers: see Acts xiv. 4, 14. The place where the room in which Matthias was chosen

is said to have been situated, is still shown by tradition ; it might have been one of the oratories or places for prayer common in Jewish houses, and is generally thought to have been in that upper room in which the last supper was taken, and also where the events related in Acts ii. took place. Some writers suppose that these transactions passed within the courts of the temple, comparing Acts ii. 46, and Luke xxiv. 53. But those who seem to be most worthy of attention are of a different opinion.

A deeply interesting account follows concerning the feast of Pentecost, which commemorated the giving of the law, *Exod. xix.*, and the ingathering of the Jewish harvest, *Lev. xxiii. 15—21*. Its name signifies “fifty,” for it was fifty days after the passover. The number of Jews who then visited the temple was very great, bringing their offerings of first-fruits, in baskets richly wrought, and adorned with flowers, reciting those beautiful words recorded in *Deut. xxvi. 5—10*. The Jewish holydays were kept from eve to eve. Probably early in the morning, when the day might be said to be fully come, the descent of the Holy Spirit took place, accompanied by a sound like rushing wind, and a bright lambent or quivering, yet divided flame, resting on each of the apostles. The operations of the Spirit have been often compared to wind and fire, *John iii. 8* ; *Isa iv. 5*. The immediate and manifest effect was, that they began to speak with other tongues or languages—a miraculous gift, necessary to enable them to go forth at once to preach among all nations. But no doubt these gifts were also accompanied by a larger measure of the graces of the Spirit than they had hitherto enjoyed, purifying and enlightening their minds, and increasing their faith, zeal, and boldness. Some texts, referring to the work of the Spirit, may here be mentioned : *Isa. xlv. 3* ; *Joel ii. 28* ; *John vii. 38, 39* ; *1 Cor. ii. 12—14* ; *xii. 7—11* ; *Luke xi. 13*. When God means to give his blessing, he first stirs up a spirit of prayer, *Ezek. xxxvi. 37*.

The latter part of *Joel ii.* was afterwards quoted by Peter with reference to this event. Though it does not occur in that section of the Old Testament which is read

in the modern Jews' synagogues, on the anniversary of this day, it probably might then have been read in the regular course, and have been afterwards changed. This remark arises from the fact, that this passage is so arranged in the Scripture lessons among the Karaite Jews, an interesting sect, who are found in the Crimea, in Russia, where their burying ground has been used for upwards of six hundred years. Dr. E. D. Clarke has given an account of his visit to this secluded body of people, who live in a retired, woody, and mountainous spot, distinguished for their habits of order, industry, and honesty, and their regard to the writings of the Old Testament, which they possess only in manuscript copies, kept with great care. They describe themselves as descendants of Abraham, early separated from the parent stock; and it is possible that they may be among the remnant who did not return after the Babylonish captivity. If so, their fathers were not included amongst those of their nation who so awfully abused their privileges; neither would they share the enmity and bitterness that may have excited others to seek to put away the remembrance of Peter's sermon, and all connected with it.

The diversity of languages introduced at Babel was the effect of a Divine interposition; and a similar miracle, (or departure from the common laws of nature,) took place at the period under notice, to lighten the curse which the sins of men had occasioned. "Language," says a writer, "is composed of sounds, which signify ideas. But the connexion is entirely arbitrary; and there are in every language peculiar modes of combining and arranging words which a stranger cannot understand. Even of those who understand a foreign tongue, few are capable of conversing therein with ease; and unless persons begin to learn at a very early period of life, they hardly ever speak like natives. Yet here were men of mature age, conversant only with the rude dialect of the Galileans, expressing themselves at once with ease and fluency in a variety of languages hitherto unknown to them." Such a miracle is not in these times to be expected; yet God has seen fit to bestow on some of his servants, even now, a remarkable readiness for acquiring different languages: and this is a

talent to be employed in his service. The effects of Divine grace, in taming and ruling the tongues of men, need not here be dwelt upon.

Among those who heard the speakers, many proselytes and strangers, who spoke foreign languages, were at once impressed; others, especially the Jews of Palestine, more hardened, ridiculed the apostles, as if they had been intoxicated with the new or sweet wine common at this season—a disgraceful state unusual among the Jews, especially in the early part of the day.

A vast number flocked together, mostly from curiosity in the first instance; but, as they are called devout men, some of them probably were under that influence without which no outward means can profit. Peter preached to them a plain and striking discourse, with a powerful application to their consciences, supporting all he said by reference to the Old Testament Scriptures. Probably, though his name only is mentioned, the other apostles delivered similar discourses; and all were signally blessed. Three thousand souls were converted; many of whom probably had turned away from the truth, while the Saviour sojourned among them.

In the history of this day of Pentecost, a striking proof appears of the little stress laid in Scripture upon the circumstantialia of religion. No description is given as to the place and minute particulars of this first Christian sermon; there is no proof that it was uttered within the precincts of the temple, like the discourses of Peter under different circumstances, in Acts iii. and v. It was most likely in the court of some Jewish house, where and about which the multitude assembled. The upper rooms, or oratories, were often portions of the house-top railed round. Nor is it recorded how long the disciples continued to occupy this place: such particulars, even if expressly stated, would not tend to edification. But the essentials of gospel truth are not left in uncertainty; they are recorded as they were fully stated by Peter, in these words: “God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.—Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the

remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.—Save yourselves from this untoward generation,” Acts ii. 36, 38, 40.

The following remarks of an experienced Christian in the present day are worthy of attention, in connexion with this subject: “When our Lord’s awakening ministry followed John the Baptist, his fame went throughout all Syria, and everywhere multitudes thronged to hear him. This provoked the wrath and envy of his enemies, and stirred them up to greater exertions. Yet, even among his worst enemies, he, in the riches of his grace, gathered a goodly multitude both of priests and people, adding daily such as should be saved, and be trophies of his loving-kindness for ever. The circumstances of our times in many respects are similar. Let us adhere to the word of God, whether the infidel seek to pervert it, or the superstitious to displace it by vain traditions. There was a great zeal for outward religion, and for their peculiar notions, to the very last, in the zealots who perished in the destruction of Jerusalem; as well as contempt for religious truths and duties manifested by the Sadducees. Let us not, then, be deluded, either by philosophy falsely so called, or by the forms of godliness, while the power is denied. The Gentile churches, like the Jewish, have only a limited season of grace.” In many an instance, the candlestick has already been removed, Rev. ii. 5, and in others, a like awful event is to be feared.

The verses which follow, Acts ii. 41—47, describe the state of the primitive church during its period of infancy and of greatest purity. Such a state could not long continue in this fallen world. The believers here described must have exercised the spirit of the well-known lines—

Jesus, where’er thy people meet,
There they behold thy mercy-seat:
Where’er they seek thee, thou art found,
And every place is hallow’d ground.

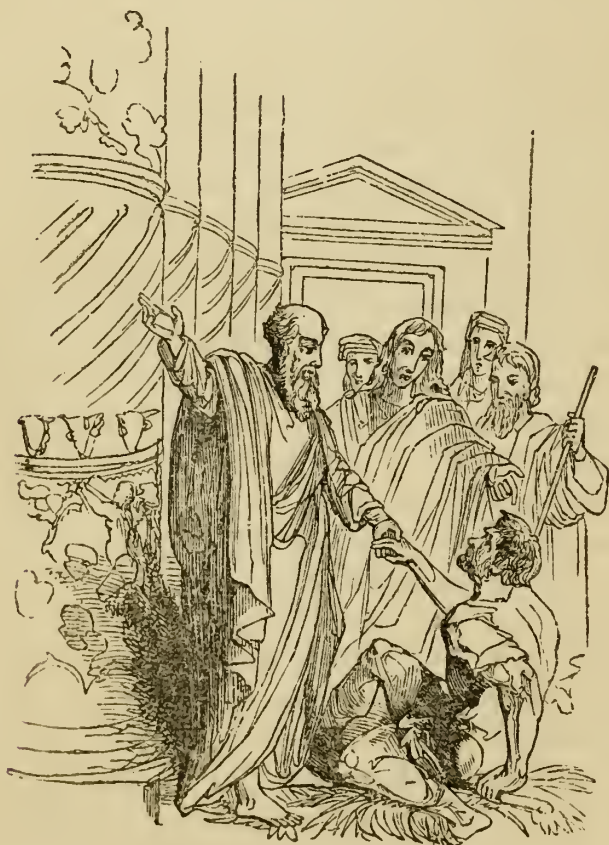
Behold, at thy commanding word,
We stretch the curtain and the cord:
Come, Lord, and fill this wider space,
And bless us with a large increase.

Good John Bunyan, in his little work, "Grace abounding to the Chief of Sinners," has described the manner in which Peter might converse with his hearers; and let it be again repeated, that he and his companions were plain, honest, working men, like John Bunyan, Harlan Page, Thomas Cranfield, and others: thousands besides of useful Christians have arisen from the same class. Bunyan supposes Peter reasoning in answer to the objections of unbelief, and by the free offers of the gospel overruling all doubts and fears. Thus Peter, having had much forgiven, loved much, and showed his love to Jesus by keeping his charge, and feeding his sheep and lambs.

The views which the disciples now held, and set forth to others, included all the essential points of Christian doctrine, found in that short summary, usually called the Apostles' Creed; all which may be proved from some portion or other of the discourses recorded in the early chapters of the Acts. Tradition relates that the twelve afterwards assembled in a cave or grotto near Jerusalem, and each uttering a clause, the whole were thrown together as the symbol of their faith: but there is no real ground for this account; it is one of the legends of a fabling age, and it is known that in some expressions this creed has been varied. It is only a human composition, though according with the word of God. The resurrection of Christ was the doctrine on which the apostles chiefly dwelt, as proving all the rest; and of this great event there had been no witnesses except believers, but of them there had been a competent number, and of respectable character; while, as Townsend observes, if the risen Saviour had appeared to the nation at large, nothing but confusion and misstatements would have resulted. A multitude, or crowd, could not act as witnesses—the great object to which the apostles, from the first, considered themselves called to attend, Acts i. 22, and in which the apostle Paul was especially permitted to join, 1 Cor. xv. 8. But, as our Lord himself declared to Thomas, "Because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed," John xx. 29. And let every one who reads these pages remember that

he is invited to partake of this blessing, now offered to him, attended with such powerful testimony as cannot be shaken or gainsaid.

Many wonders and signs were done by the apostles from the time when they were filled with the Holy Ghost. One of these is minutely detailed, Acts iii. Peter and John, going to the temple to worship, where they as yet constantly attended, though they no longer vainly relied on its services, like their self-righteous countrymen, Jer. vii. 4, were accosted by a poor cripple, who was daily



carried to the gate called Beautiful, probably the principal entrance to the temple, as it is said, by Josephus, to have surpassed all the rest in splendid materials and rich ornaments, being covered with plates of Corinthian brass, a brilliant and precious mixture of gold, silver, and copper

The lame man seems to have often received gifts from other worshippers of the same rank in life as Peter and John. He applied to them for relief; they had no money to give, but were enabled to work a miracle in the name of Jesus. The Saviour, when on earth, had cured men by his own power; not so the apostles, who at once disclaimed such honour and authority, and took occasion to speak the praises of their Master, and to call the attention of the gathering crowds to the Old Testament prophecies of the Messiah. The man's age, and the long duration of his infirmity, clearly prove that his disease was inveterate; there was no room for imagination or deception; he was known to all his neighbours; and the time and place of his cure, being distinctly specified, are so many evidences of the truth of the narrative. Impostors would dread inquiry, and therefore shun such precise details. See Acts iii. 12—26.

The discourse here given was that "sermon of St. Peter" which a Christian minister lately read to catch the attention of some poor Irish papists. Alas! that so many souls should still remain in ignorance of the Saviour, the great Prophet like unto Moses, and be more ready to listen to the words of a man of like passions with themselves. The miracle and the remarks which it called forth were made useful, it seems, to many, (the Greek word implies that the five thousand believers now mentioned include the former converts;) but it called forth fresh enmity from the opposers of Christ; and now persecutions began to assault them. Annas and Caiaphas, with others like minded, felt they were condemned by this testimony, and called them to account. But they could not condemn the apostles, and, for fear of popular opposition, let them go, yet not before Peter had expressly addressed them as rulers, concluding with a pointed and forcible application, Acts iv. 10, and they could only make an impotent attempt to silence these "witnesses to the resurrection;" as yet they could not find even a pretext on which to punish them. Was this Peter, who so lately shrunk from the questions of a maid-servant in the house of the same Caiaphas? There was a cause for the change:

he had repented, and wept bitterly; he had been forgiven; he had been led by the Holy Spirit to seek and find, in communion with Jesus, that grace to help in time of need which is offered to his disciples in all ages. The change was not greater than that which the renewal of the covenant of Jehovah, *Exod. vi. 3—8*, produced in the once backward and hesitating, but afterwards fearless and persevering Moses.

A pleasing scene is described, *Acts iv. 23—37*: the devotional exercises and social life of the first believers, especially their spirit of brotherly love and self-denial. The distribution of their possessions was a desirable measure, at a time when the church was comparatively small, and surrounded by enemies; but it was never absolutely required, *chap. v. 4*, and would be impossible in an ordinary state of things. As Mosheim says, it was rather using than possessing things in common. Idle persons, who would not work, were not tolerated or maintained, *2 Thess. iii. 6—12*. The apostles, in their writings, speak distinctly of rich and poor, urging the former to liberality, and the latter to contentment, *1 Cor. xvi. 1—3*; *1 Tim. vi. 18*; *James ii. 1—5*. The new converts were no doubt so impressed with the fleeting nature of earthly possessions, and with the destruction so speedily about to come upon the land of Judæa and their nation, the measure of their iniquity being now full and running over, that they were ready to dispose of their property, in order to supply the wants of their poorer brethren. Thus they fulfilled the law of Christ, *Matt. vi. 18—20*; *Luke xii. 33*; and had no cause to regret this conduct, when the impenitent and uncharitable Jews, described in *James v. 1—9*, suffered the threatened judgments of God on their ill-gotten possessions. Two instances are mentioned: the first a sincere believer, Barnabas, probably a descendant of the Jews who were scattered throughout the Greek and Roman colonies, afterwards an active preacher in Cyprus, his native land; the other, Ananias, a hypocrite. Both might have seemed alike to human eyes while selling their estates, and hastening to the apostles at Jerusalem with the price

but their hearts were known to God, as differing widely from each other.

Even in the purest days of the church it contained hypocrites: the tares have ever been mingled with the wheat. Whether Ananias and his wife joined the disciples from mercenary motives, or a fickle love of novelty, or from temporary convictions, is not stated; but they sought to gain false praise for generosity, by offering part of the sum they received for their possessions, as if it were the whole, while they kept back the remainder to gratify their covetousness, or to satisfy that unbelief which kept them from being decided followers of Christ. Peter, directed by the Spirit of God, solemnly reprov'd Ananias, who at once dropped down dead at his feet; for the



judgment of God went with his reprimand, which was not the mere words of cursing, like the papal threats in later times; and the same stroke fell upon his wife, who joined him in his sin, about three hours after.

How vain the deceit of the heart
To shroud in a mantle so frail;
Its perfidy thus by its art
To think from Omniscience to veil!

Lost woman ! but three hours before
The form of thy partner in sin
Was borne, wan and cold, from the door,
Where thou didst so rashly come in.

And they who had carried him out,
The clods o'er his bosom to lay,
Were waiting the threshold about,
To bear thy sad ruin away.

Thus mercy to judgment will call,
And who shall this coming abide,
When wrath the most fearful of all,
The wrath of the Lamb is defied !

There have been other cases of sudden death, equally awful, following falsehood in appeals to the Most High. The reader of English history will recollect the case of one of highest rank—the end of the haughty earl Godwin ; and a like case in lower life, when, at Devizes in Wiltshire, a woman, in the year 1753, fell down dead while asserting falsehood, uttered with an oath, as is recorded in the market-place of that town. Often, indeed, are liars and swearers suddenly cut off, without time for repentance. The fate of Ananias and Sapphira is too little apprehended, though their names are familiar even to children. Observe, too, that their sin was rather an equivocation than an open falsehood, the lie being rather implied than directly spoken. No such deceptions, however disregarded by man, can escape the judgment of God, who hates every false way.

The effect of this solemn event was salutary, as Scott has truly remarked :—“ This apparent severity on two detected hypocrites was real mercy to numbers ; it excited a reverential fear and holy jealousy in the whole company ; it doubtless brought them to strict self-examination, prayer, and circumspection, and a dread of hypocrisy, covetousness, or vain glory ; it prevented the increase of scandals in the church, and the intrusion of hypocrites, and thus it conduced to render the gospel honourable in the eyes of the people. This event was a Divine attestation to the apostles' integrity and veracity, fully intelligible by

their enemies. God would never have inflicted such a judgment at their word on inferior dissemblers, if their testimony to the resurrection had been a deception; and it showed that they would not connive at iniquity in those of their own party, for the sake of their private interests, or that of the society." It was also a special proof of Peter's firmness and sincerity.

When weeds are rooted out, wholesome plants flourish; and a short season of special prosperity ensued. While none but the truly sincere would profess the religion of Jesus, they were held in high esteem by the people at large, for their usefulness and piety. The sick were brought out, in hope of their being passed by the shadow of Peter; but there is no statement that any were thus benefited. The disciples were too numerous to assemble in the upper room; they resorted to Solomon's porch. All this excited the opposition of enemies; and the high priest, with his party, the Sadducees, the openly profane, earthly pleasure-seekers, committed the apostles to prison, from which they were miraculously delivered by an angel. See Psa. xxxiv. 7. At the direction of this heavenly messenger they returned to the temple, and once more began to preach the word of life, where they had so often heard from their Master such words as "never man spake."

Being once more brought before the rulers, the promise of their Lord was fulfilled, Mark xiii. 9—11. Peter gave the noble answer, "We ought to obey God rather than men:" a maxim which, as Newton observes, men continually lose sight of, though it is as obvious to the meanest capacity as that two and two make four. Irritated at their honest plainness, the sanhedrim caused the apostles to withdraw, and would have taken violent measures against them, but for the prudent counsel of Gamaliel, a much respected Pharisee; he was the tutor of St. Paul, and son of the famous rabbi Hillel. The number of factious leaders who opposed the Romans had greatly increased of late years: four of these, all named Simon, are recorded within the space of thirty years, and three others, all named Theudas, or Judas, within ten years; but these

were not persons of rank or ability ; their attempts quickly failed, and their parties were soon dispersed. Gamaliel argued that this would be the case with “these men” also, if their design was merely their own ; but if it came from God, all opposition was dangerous. Such calm, steady reasoning might well gain for Gamaliel the approval of his countrymen ; his state before God it is impossible for us to judge. While some writers regard him as another Nicodemus, secretly believing in Christ, yet afraid to confess the Saviour, others relate his dying prayer as including a strong imprecation against Christians. However, he was at this time certainly an instrument used by God to save the lives of many valuable men, who returned to their work with renewed diligence.

Hitherto, the harmony of the Christian church was undisturbed ; but the first dissension upon record arose about this time, between the Hebrews and their Grecian or Gentile brethren, respecting the maintainance of their widows—a custom long preserved by Christians, 1 Tim. v. 16, but, like other acts of charity, unknown to the heathen world. The speedy and friendly arrangement of this dispute has been often commended ; moreover, the names mentioned, Acts vi. 5, are all of Grecian origin ; and thus the seven deacons, or assistants to the apostles in secular matters, were chosen from the very party who had before seemed to be neglected. How ready to yield were the Hebrews, in thus consenting to the appointment of others ! how faithful the Grecians, who were not even suspected of partiality ! Observe, too, the resolution of the apostles to devote themselves to those spiritual services which are especially required from the ministers of God ; they did not court popularity, or assume to themselves the honour and right of relieving the needy ; in this respect they differed from the practice of the monastic orders of later times. Even the comparatively little events of the period show that the Spirit of the Lord now rested on the Christian church, having departed from the Jewish dispensation, like that change related as to the first king of Israel, when he was set aside for his disobedience, and “the Lord was with David,” his successor.

Still a harvest was gathered, ver. 7 ; even a great company of the priests became obedient to the faith.

Promotion to a new station brings with it new duties and trials ; and thus it was with these deacons. From Nicolas the ancient Nicolaitane heresy was named, Rev. ii. 6 ; but it is not certain that he is to be charged with its errors. Stephen is especially commended : his faithfulness and zeal soon excited enemies, who wilfully made false accusations respecting him, and accused him of blasphemy, the crime which they had once alleged against his Lord. But the Old Testament prophets had declared that the temple of Jerusalem should not always remain, Jer. xxvi. 6 ; Mic. iii. 12 ; and their warnings should have excited fear and attention in latter days. "Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning." Stephen made a long defence before the sanhedrim, showing that he well knew the Scriptures : and, referring to the early history of the Jewish nation, which was ever a subject to which they gladly listened, he proved that God had been worshipped by the patriarchs before the appointment of the Mosaic ritual ; that Moses himself was a type of Christ, and that the highest privileges had been abused by the ancient Israelites. He was proceeding to apply these subjects, but his enraged hearers stopped him, and without any semblance of justice, or restraint of their enmity against the truth, dragged him forth, and stoned him ; thus violating their own law, Lev. xxiv. 16.

As some tall rock amidst the waves
The fury of the tempest braves ;
While the fierce billows, tossing high, '
Break at its foot, and, murmuring, die ;

So faithful Stephen, undismay'd,
The malice of the Jews survey'd ;
The holy joy which filled his breast
A lustre on his face impress'd.

"Behold," said he, "the world of light
Is opened to my strengthen'd sight ;
My glorious Lord appears in view—
That Jesus whom ye lately slew."

With such a friend and witness near,
No form of death could make him fear :
Calm, amidst showers of stones he kneels,
And only for his murderers feels.

Townsend beautifully says : “The great High Priest, who had passed into the holy of holies to intercede for man, looked down from heaven, and opened the veil of the firmament, that his first martyr might gaze on his exaltation and glory. The guilty bystanders were too much engaged with the work of destruction on earth to look up



to heaven ; even if they had done so, it is by no means certain that the appearance of the Shechinah would have been manifested to them also. We do not yet understand the nature of the universe of God. The distance of the visible stars is so great, that the intellect of man is bewildered in any attempts to comprehend it. But the Christian cannot be defrauded of his consolations, by the imperfect discoveries obtained through the powers of the telescope, or by the wonders of the human imagination. St. Stephen, filled with the Holy Ghost, saw in the flesh his blessed Redeemer. The first Christian martyr was enabled to behold the heaven of heavens, as a pledge and earnest of his own immortal happiness ; and, through

him, a pledge to all those who, by the same faith, shall offer themselves living and acceptable sacrifices to God. When we consider the sublime and glorious realities to which we are destined, and the manner in which life and immortality have been secured to us by the crucified Saviour, surely we lose sight of our invaluable privileges, if we permit ourselves to be enthralled by the pleasures and attractions of this evil world. The faith of a Christian has done very little for man, if it does not deliver him from the galling tyranny of unrestrained passions."

"I shall always insist," says bishop Horsley, in his answer to a Socinian writer, "that the blessed Stephen died a martyr to the Deity of Christ." He died, as he had lived, attesting the Deity of our crucified Master. Alas! that many should still refuse their assent to this all-important truth; yet now, as of old, "Christcrucified" is "unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God," 1 Cor. i. 23, 24.



CHAPTER II.

PERSECUTIONS—PHILIP AND THE ETHIOPIAN—THE
CONVERSION OF SAUL.

THE dying prayer of Stephen for his enemies was heard in behalf of the youthful Saul, who was then an active assistant to the enemies of Christ. A bitter persecution arose, unchecked by the Roman government, which at this period favoured the heads of the Jewish nation, having recalled Pontius Pilate, and deposed Caiaphas. The discouragements of the disciples at this time are graphically described by Todd:—"Imagine them assembled, many countenances indicating anxiety and alarm. At length one speaks: 'Oh! the torrents of ridicule with which we are assailed; how shall we ever stand before it?' Another remarks: 'I can bear the ridicule very well; but they tell such falsehoods about us, they will utterly ruin our reputation, and destroy all our influence among the people!' A third feels most deeply that they should be hated for the good they were doing, and that these falsehoods are invented to make them odious on account of their usefulness. A fourth cannot bear the thought of being charged with wrong motives, and having all his efforts ascribed to the desire of building up a party. A fifth feels disheartened, because their success is principally confined to the poor. A sixth is disturbed that there should be so much noise and confusion, such a tumult, that there can be no living in the city. Another regrets the disunion of families occasioned by their preaching; and another points to the blood of Stephen, and hints at a little more prudence, lest they should all be massacred. Now, what shall they do in all this trouble? They kneel down and pray, and the clouds begin to clear away. One and another begin to recollect the words of Christ, how he had foretold that all this would happen in just this manner; how he had commanded, warned, and encouraged

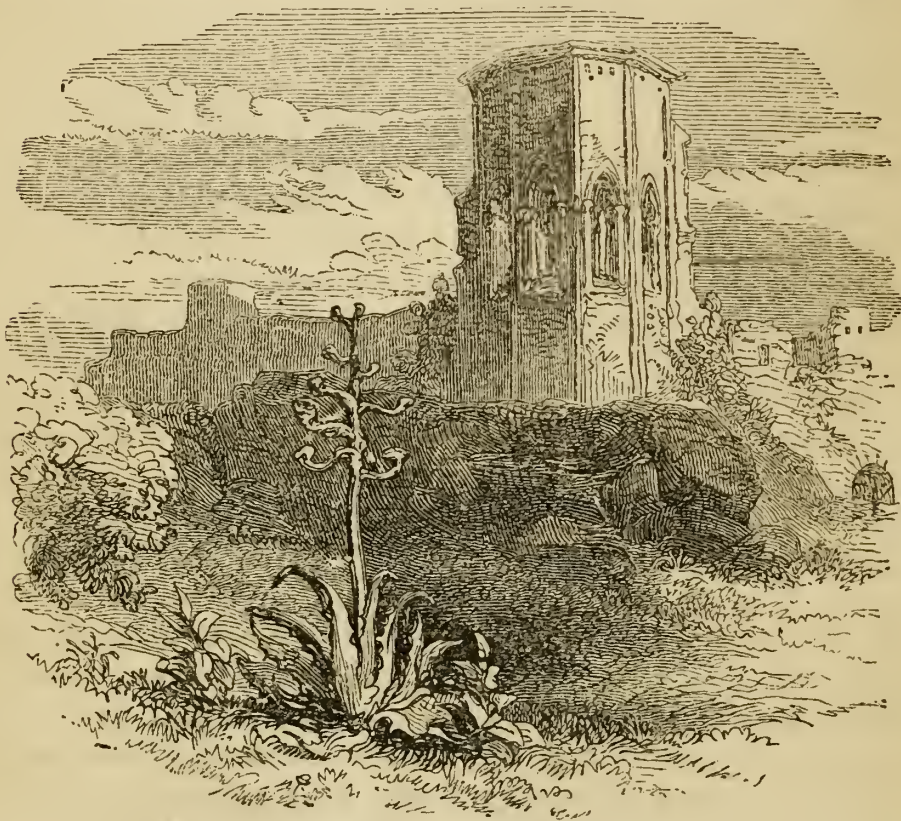
them; promised them a mansion in his Father's house; had gone to prepare a place for them, and had sent the Comforter. And now they have only to do their duty, and leave the consequences with their Master. Their despondency is all gone; they go again to their work, with more resolution and earnestness than ever. This is the spirit that should animate us in all our well-directed efforts."

The wrath of man shall praise God; and "they who were scattered," by this persecution, went everywhere preaching the word. Judæa was well situated for communication with other lands. The Mediterranean Sea rendered it accessible to Europe; Egypt and Africa were near it on the south; and the civilized districts of Asia were its northern and eastern boundaries. In other times of persecution, believers have often been driven from one place to another, carrying the gospel with them. Romaine, Fletcher, Cennick, and many other valuable men, were the children of French Protestant refugees. The apostles remained in Jerusalem; probably for the same reason that Cranmer, the archbishop of the Reformation, refused to leave England with some of his brethren in the reign of queen Mary, "lest he should seem ashamed of what he had done."

Philip (one of the deacons, not the apostle,) went and preached in Samaria, an ancient town, surrounded by hills, situated in a fertile country, rich in fruit trees. It is now entirely in ruins; heaps of stones cover the hill which formed its site, and forcibly recall to mind the prophetic descriptions of Isaiah xxviii. 1; Hosea xiii. 11; Micah i. 6. The only solid building visible is the ruin of an old Greek church. But, when Philip went there, it was no doubt very magnificent and populous; Herod the Great having rebuilt it, and called it Sebaste, or venerable, in honour of Augustus Cæsar.

Dr. Wilson, of Bombay, in 1843, visited the town of Nablous, the ancient Shechem, which is still inhabited by a remnant of the Samaritan sect, who now shun intercourse with the Jews, and avoid all who do not join with them in their veneration for the Kiblah, as they term Mount

Gerizim. Although, like their Jewish neighbours, they still look for a prophet yet to come, they differ from them, by observing only such festivals and ceremonies as are plainly directed in the law of Moses. They do not offer the first-fruits on the day of Pentecost, because, as they say, they are not agriculturists. They, however, annually sacrifice lambs on the return of the passover, though without any idea of their typical import. They



MODERN SAMARIA.

object to the Psalms, the books of Kings, and other portions of the Old Testament, in which superior honour is given to the temple of Jerusalem; but they highly venerate the law of Moses, though they divide and read it in a manner of their own, which differs, in some respects, from the order observed by the Jews. It is probable that this people have continued to exist, for more than two thousand years, since the time when their forefathers were settled here by the king of Assyria, 2 Kings xvii. 24, observing

the same rites that were practised in the days, when Philip went down to Samaria, and preached Christ to them, and healed diseases, and there was great joy in that city. There he met with Simon, usually called Magus, or the sorcerer; who had long gained an artful ascendancy over the people by pretending to supernatural power. This is not the place to discuss the nature of his craft; suffice it to say, that he owned the superiority of the apostles, when Peter and John came, by the influence of the Spirit of God, to communicate spiritual gifts to the converts of Philip. Gifts sometimes exist without grace; Simon desired to purchase the same power, in order to keep up his own credit. Peter severely rebuked him, and at once refused his evil gains, urging him to repentance. There is no proof that Simon profited by this exhortation. Ecclesiastical writers mention him as a continued opponent of the apostles, teaching views utterly contrary to the truth, even setting himself up as an object of idolatry; but they relate some stories concerning him evidently fabulous. He was an awful character. Like Balaam, he could see and confess the truth, but his heart was not touched by it; he could dread the doom of sinners, but was not willing to forsake his sins. Thus we see from a fact, even in the early ages of Christianity, that baptism was not the new birth, it was not the implanting of a new nature—regeneration. Simon desired the prayers of others, but he was not himself a praying man. His name has been perpetuated by the term Simony, which is applied to dealings in religious matters for the sake of lucre.

Philip was sent, by an angel from heaven, to Gaza: he proceeded without murmuring or disputing, though the way was desert. Like believers in our own day, he knew that the steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord. His journey was the means of the conversion of an estimable character, one of the chief servants of Candace (the usual name for the female sovereigns of Ethiopia) who seems to have been a pious Jewish proselyte. Three things are recorded to his praise:—he had been to Jerusalem to worship; he was returning, reading; and his reading was in the Book of God. He was reading a remarkable

passage: "He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken," Isa. liii. 7, 8. Greeks and Romans would have styled him a barbarian; but his conduct might have shamed those heathens, who, professing themselves wise, became fools, rejecting or neglecting the words of inspired wisdom. Let Christians learn from this man, who had charge of all the treasure of a kingdom, to improve those intervals of leisure which must occur in the busiest lives; as Henry Martyn, when waiting at the East India House, repeated mentally several portions of Scripture, remembering how often he had regretted the pressure of public engagements.

Philip, directed by God, accosted him, saying, "Understandest thou what thou readest?" His ready attention to the poor foot-traveller, and his reply, "How can I, except some man should guide me?" showed a humble, docile spirit, though perhaps prejudiced by the errors of Jewish doctors, who might already have begun to misinterpret that beautiful prophecy, Isaiah liii., and who were too ready to speak of the Scriptures as not to be understood by general readers, without the direction of professed teachers. They early used to say, that "no man can have a peaceable and quiet conscience, who leaves the study of the Talmud to go to the Bible; that the Bible is like water, the Mishna like wine, the Talmud like spiced wine." More of these false and blasphemous assertions might be added; for such a spirit has too much prevailed everywhere, even among nominal Christians, as among professed Jews. When Satan cannot take the Bible from man, he would gladly hide it by bringing forward the traditions or authority of poor mortals.

Very different was the teaching of Philip. "Jesus Christ, and him crucified," was the only theme of his discourse. This brought at once conviction and satisfaction to his hearer; he believed in Jesus as the Son of God,

was baptized in that name by his own request, and went on with joy and heart-felt peace to his native country. There he preached the gospel, and founded a Christian church, according to the testimony of early writers, and the usual practice of truly awakened believers.

God had compared his people of old to the Ethiopians, on account of their neglect of his word, Amos ix. 7. But the promise was now about to be fulfilled, that Ethiopia should “stretch out her hands unto God,” Psal. lxxviii. 31. But it is not certain that the country at large professed the religion of Christ until A. D. 327, when it was visited by some pious merchants from Tyre, who had intercourse with the Christians of Abyssinia; though some writers consider that the apostle Matthew had preached in these parts. In some of the mountain fastnesses of this land, which is now a country of pagans and Mohammedans, retired communities of Christians have been found, who still hold the profession of the gospel, though probably with much ignorance of its doctrines. They are said, in some cases, to reside entirely in caves, for the sake of security from their surrounding enemies. The notices respecting them are well authenticated, and particularly interesting from their novelty. Major Harris, who visited that country in 1842, as an ambassador thither, relates the inquiries he made, and the information he received, as to the continuance of Christianity, though accompanied with slavery and other degrading practices. He says there are more churches “in Abyssinia than in any country of the same size.” “Where,” says the missionary Wilson, “is the enterprising Christian traveller, who will personally visit these remote localities in the interior of Africa, and descant to the inhabitants on the love and grace of Him whose name they bear, till, moved by his own Spirit, they lay hold on his righteousness, and are born again in his image?”

To return to the history of apostolic times—the intercourse between Philip and the Ethiopian has been thus described:—

’Twas silent all and dead,
Beside the barren sea

Where Philip's steps were led,
Led there, O Lord, by thee.

Upon his lonely way
A high-born traveller came,
Reading a mournful lay
Of Him who bore our shame.

To muse what Heaven might mean,
His wondering brow he raised,
And met an eye serene,
That on him watchful gazed.

Now wonder turns to love :
The scrolls of sacred lore
No darksome mazes prove,
The desert tires no more.

They part to meet in heaven,
But of the joy they share,
Believing and forgiven,
The sweet remembrance share.

From the original, it seems that Philip was naturally unwilling to leave this new convert, but he was guided by the special direction of God.

Philip is next described as visiting Azotus, or Ashdod, with other towns on the coast, and afterwards settling with his daughters at Cæsarea, the Roman capital of Judæa: see Acts xxi. 8. This interesting narrative is a good lesson to travellers, to look up to God in all their ways, and to avail themselves of opportunities to commune with others about him, while going by the way, as well as when sitting in the house.

The beginning of Acts ix. opens with a different character. A pious writer observes: "We can imagine the sceptic saying, 'Show me a man, learned, bold, impatient of control, a clear and reasoning head, a well-stored and cultivated mind, with every opportunity for discovering fallacies in the gospel, and every prejudice armed against it; bring an instance of the conversion of such a man to a creed he had learned to hate, and whose followers he had actually begun to persecute, and I will agree that something more than natural means must have made this man a Christian.' We triumphantly point to St. Paul.

Could flesh and blood have revealed the doctrines of the cross with transforming power to such a heart as this? Let himself reply: 'By the grace of God I am what I am. —God separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace.' "

This remarkable character is at first called by his Hebrew name, Saul. He was of the tribe of Benjamin, like the king of the same name. Educated as a Pharisee, he early joined with eagerness in persecuting the truth, Acts viii. 1, 3; and having succeeded in rooting out from Jerusalem all, perhaps, excepting the apostles, he obtained authority from the high priest to proceed to Damascus, the capital of ancient Syria. There the gospel had already been carried, either by some new converts, or more probably by some of the persecuted believers, who had obeyed their Lord in fleeing to another city.

Damascus has lately become the station of the Scottish mission for the conversion of the Jews; on account of which Mr. Graham and his family there fixed their abode on September 15, 1843, and have since been joined by other assistants. There are about five thousand Jews in that city, which is considered to be within the boundaries of the land of Israel, in its full extent, according to Ezek. xlvii. 16; Zech. ix. 1; and they have constant intercourse with their brethren in other parts of the east. Their houses and modes of life are found closely to resemble those described in the "Manners and Customs of the Jews:" the walls being chiefly of clay, though they inclose square courts paved with marble, adorned with fountains and flowering shrubs; and the rooms are furnished with carpets and cushions, and gilded or painted walls. The street called Straight, Acts ix. 11, is the chief thoroughfare in the city, and usually presents a busy scene of traffic. The house of Ananias is pointed out by the monks of Damascus, who have three Latin monasteries there, one of which stands near the reputed house of Judas, containing a small vault under ground, where Saul is said to have sojourned. The walls appear very ancient, and houses are built over them, in many parts, which may remind the reader of Acts ix. 25.

The whole population of Damascus, in 1843, amounted to one hundred and eleven thousand, five hundred, and fifty-two souls, of whom nearly ninety-five thousand were Mohammedans, and more than eleven thousand nominal Christians.

Travellers have described the pleasure with which they looked upon the buildings of Damascus, as these first rise to the view amidst the surrounding desert. A magnificent church, once erected there, is now become a Mohammedan mosque. Not far off is the supposed site of Saul's conversion; a village called El Kochaba, or the Star, from the supernatural light which he beheld. The account, Acts ix., should be attentively perused, and compared with his two subsequent narrations, Acts xxii. and xxvi.: "And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying in the Hebrew tongue, 'Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?'" That it was not a dream or vision, but a real appearance and voice from the Lord Jesus himself, seems clear from the testimony of those who were with Saul, who heard the voice, but saw no speaker, and from the description of the time and circumstances, being at mid-day. He needed not to ask, "Lord, when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee?" he was at once made to know, that what is done to the least of his followers, Christ reckons as done to himself: whoso toucheth them, toucheth the apple of his eye. Thus Saul was brought to ask, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" This was the rebel's surrender to grace, as Newton, himself a converted blasphemer, describes:—

"Now, Lord, I would be thine alone,
Come take possession of thine own;
For thou hast set me free:
Released from Satan's hard command,
See all my powers now waiting stand,
To be employed by thee.

"And can I be the very same,
Who lately durst blaspheme thy name,
And on thy gospel tread?
Surely, each one who hears my case
Will praise thee, and confess thy grace
Invincible indeed."

That Saul should lose his eye-sight, and take no nourishment till the third day, is not wonderful; for his whole frame had undergone strong excitement. Whether he had, in his earlier days, been present on any occasion of the blessed Saviour's appearance when on earth, is quite uncertain. If so, how different would be his views then, from what they afterwards became: compare 2 Cor. v. 16, 17. It is an awful consideration, that men could see and hear the blessed Jesus with unbelieving, impenitent hearts; it forcibly exemplifies the emptiness of even the best outward means of grace, unless accompanied by the Divine blessing, that free gift of the Spirit which Jesus departed to procure, saying, "He shall take of mine, and show it unto you." This grace was now bestowed on Saul; thenceforth he could say, "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me," acknowledging his corruptions, yet relying on his Saviour for deliverance. See Romans vii.

"Sold under sin," was Paul's lamenting cry;
 (Strange word to hear from an apostle's mouth!)
 Why strange to hear? why wonderful in Paul?
 Paul had no claim from law or Scripture right,
 More than the vile and worst of Adam's race.
 Feel'st thou thy sickly sore? thy nature's plague?
 Bring it to Christ, with faith in humble prayer.
 This was Paul's remedy, his course for health.

(Saul's immediate movements were guided by revelation or direction from the Spirit: this was the privilege of the apostles, for, in that early age, they needed such express guidance: see Gal. i. 16, 17; ii. 2.) What a change must have passed on the stubborn, unruly spirit of Saul, before he could submit to the will of the Lord, and find delight in communion with him, even in the solitudes of Arabia, where there were few men at all like-minded with himself.

The dread with which the believers at Damascus had expected his coming, is shown by the remonstrance which Ananias ventured to address to God. But the wolf was now become a lamb: this should teach men to avoid rash judgments of others, and needless anxieties about future events. "Behold, he prayeth!" was the testimony of the

Lord concerning Paul. Where this can be truly said of any soul, the work of grace is undoubtedly begun. All have not the same alarms, but all need secret prayer and consideration : see John i. 48. As a strict Pharisee, Saul had made many long prayers for show ; but never before had he thus prayed, with his heart drawing nigh to the Father, in the name of Jesus. When restored to sight, and admitted among the disciples, he quickly gave evidence of his conversion, preaching Christ in the synagogues, and confounding the Jews at Damascus ; so that he himself was soon persecuted, and obliged to escape, being let



down by the wall in a basket. He went to Jerusalem ; but by his own account he seems, even before his preaching in Damascus, to have spent some time in Arabia, where he most likely received a deeper insight into gospel mysteries, Gal. i. 17 ; 2 Cor. xii. 1—4.

The bodily appearance of Saul is thus described by

early writers, but it may not be correct:—"He was low, and of little stature, and somewhat stooping; his complexion fair, his countenance grave, his head small, his eyes carrying a kind of beauty and sweetness in them." He tells us they were wont to say of him, that his "bodily presence was weak, and his speech contemptible"—in which respect he is styled, by Chrysostom, "a man three cubits high, (about five feet,) yet tall enough to reach heaven." He seems to have enjoyed no very firm and athletic constitution, being often subject to distempers. Jerome particularly reports that he was frequently afflicted with the headache, and that this was thought by many to have been "the thorn in the flesh sent to buffet him." Many modern divines have considered that, after the conversion of Saul, he suffered from weakness of eyes, which might, from its pricking nature, be fitly termed a thorn, comparing Gal. iv. 14, 15, and 2 Cor. xii. 7. All this is conjecture; but it is certain that God has often seen fit to afflict his most eminently gifted servants with trials, arising from the weakness of their mortal frames, as was the case with Richard Baxter, Robert Hall, and others. Sanctified afflictions are blessings to the sufferers, both while they endure them, and after recovery from them: thus Hezekiah said, "By these things men live, and in all these is the life of my spirit," Isa. xxxviii. 16. Still the trials of which the apostle speaks would seem to imply something more deeply grieving to the spirit than any bodily defect.

The comparative peace which the church enjoyed for a season is traced, by historians, to the annoyance which the Jews then suffered from the heathen emperor Caligula, who ordered his statue to be placed as an idol in their temple. Thus do human records, if duly considered, confirm the testimony of holy writ; and equally strong proof is given as to the wicked and persecuting spirit evinced by the Jews in general during this age—which Josephus states was exceeding the sin of Sodom, and justly provoking God to destroy their city. The Christian reader will recall to mind 1 Thess. ii. 14—16; Heb. x. 32—34.

CHAPTER III.

THE GOSPEL PREACHED TO GENTILES—ANTIOCH IN SYRIA—PETER IMPRISONED—DEATH OF HEROD.

THREE roads are described as leading from Jerusalem northwards: the first through Samaria to Capernaum, Nazareth, etc.; the second by Jericho, beyond Jordan; the third along the sea coast. No account is given of our Lord's having travelled in the latter direction; but here his apostle Peter successfully preached in his name, as he passed throughout all quarters—that is, in the principal parts of the land of Canaan, where the gospel was made known, at this period, by the apostles who were teachers of the circumcision, Gal. ii. 9. He cured Æneas, who had for eight years been crippled with the palsy. Such a miracle was new there, and excited much attention. Shortly after, Peter was summoned to Joppa, a neighbouring sea-port town, where a female disciple was lately deceased; but, in answer to his prayers, she was raised to life again. Christianity has, in all ages, been promoted by the influence of pious women. The record of her name, Tabitha or Dorcas, is followed by the account of the good works and alms-deeds which she did. Her sex and manifest duty required her to be a keeper at home; yet, constrained by the love of her Redeemer, she devoted her time and property to his service. She had left not only proofs of piety, but of personal industry: garments not purchased, but made by herself, perhaps spun and woven by her own hands, or under her direction, for the poor, especially widows; and no doubt she cared for their souls as well as their bodies. No answer can be given from Scripture to the questions, How long, after Peter had restored her to life, did she continue a public blessing? How did she spend the remainder of her days? It is pleasing to add, that in the present day, many females are not slothful, but followers of her who now rests from her labours, and her works follow her.

Hitherto, the gospel had been made known only to the Jews and Jewish proselytes; but still the word of truth declared that Christ should be a light to the Gentiles. The first foreign convert recorded in the history of the apostles was Cornelius, a Roman centurion or officer over one hundred soldiers, whom Hales supposes to be the same mentioned in Luke xxiv. At least, he had some knowledge of the true God, and was observant of the duties of piety and charity; though it is not stated that, like the Ethiopian eunuch, he went to Jerusalem to worship. He lived at Cæsarea, the Roman capital of Judæa, a city greatly enlarged and adorned by Herod, who constructed a port there for ships, and erected a Roman theatre and other similar buildings, which would have been disliked in a Jewish city. It is now only a splendid ruin, though it is named as a town standing during the events of the middle ages. Cornelius, far more devout and excellent than those around him, could not, however, be saved by his good works; but God, in mercy, directed him by an angel, to send to Joppa for Simon Peter, who should show him the way of salvation. The angel did not preach to him of Jesus; the treasure of the gospel is committed to men, it is sent in earthen vessels, that all the glory may be given to God himself. Peter was then lodging with one Simon, a tanner. This trade was despised by the Jews in general, being considered unclean, as connected with dead animals, and was usually practised in the outskirts of towns or cities, near to some river or sea. Probably in Joppa, as elsewhere, many of the humble and lowly received the word of life, which was scorned by the rich and noble.

Unheard by every human ear,
 The good Cornelius knelt alone,
 Nor dream'd his prayer and tear
 Would help a world undone.

The while, upon his terraced roof
 The loved apostle to his Lord,
 In silent thought, aloof
 To heavenly vision soar'd.

The saint beside the ocean pray'd,
 The soldier in his chosen bower,

Where all his eye survey'd
Seem'd sacred in that hour.

To each unknown his brother's prayer,
Yet brethren true, in dearest love
Were they—and now they share
Eternal joys above.

The town of Joppa has been often described; it stands on a rocky promontory, surrounded on three sides by the sea, and commanding extensive prospects. It was destroyed in the Roman war; but an ancient wall, now forming part of the house where the British consul resides, is shown as a relic of the place where Peter lodged. It has always been one of the chief sea-ports of Judæa: it was so even in the days of Jonah; but it is more insignificant and gloomy-looking than most other eastern towns, though the country around is productive of rich fruit trees. Here Peter went on the house-top to pray, when he received a



communication from God which startled him at the time; for it bade him to kill and eat some of the creatures expressly forbidden by the Mosaic ritual, Lev. xi. This vision purported the abrogation of the ceremonial law, which had assisted in keeping the Jews a distinct nation; and thus the mind of Peter was prepared for the message from Cornelius, who was a Gentile. Peter repaired to

Cæsarea, taking with him some Jewish converts as witnesses, and found a large assembly of relatives and friends waiting to hear; while Cornelius himself welcomed him with an act of homage, which, however common in eastern courts, was not usual from the Romans to men of other nations, especially to Jews. Here again let it be observed, that this short sketch must be compared with the record of Scripture, not substituted for it.

Peter went through the leading truths of the gospel, setting forth Christ as a Saviour and a Judge: his ministry was sealed by the descent of the Holy Spirit on many present, in a similar manner to the event of the day of Pentecost. At their request, he remained a short time with them, and caused them to receive baptism; thus attending to the precept of his Master, first teaching and then baptizing all nations, Matt. xxviii. 19.

So strong were their national prejudices, that the brethren of Peter severely censured his conduct. He softened them by a courteous explanation, and they rejoiced at the good news of the conversion of Gentiles. Shall not we, sinners of the Gentiles, also do the same, when we turn to Eph. i. 2, and look to the rock whence we were hewn? And we must own the fulfilment of the promises to the distant parts of the world; they are too numerous to be enlarged upon: for instance, Psa. xcvi. 1; Isa. lx. 9.

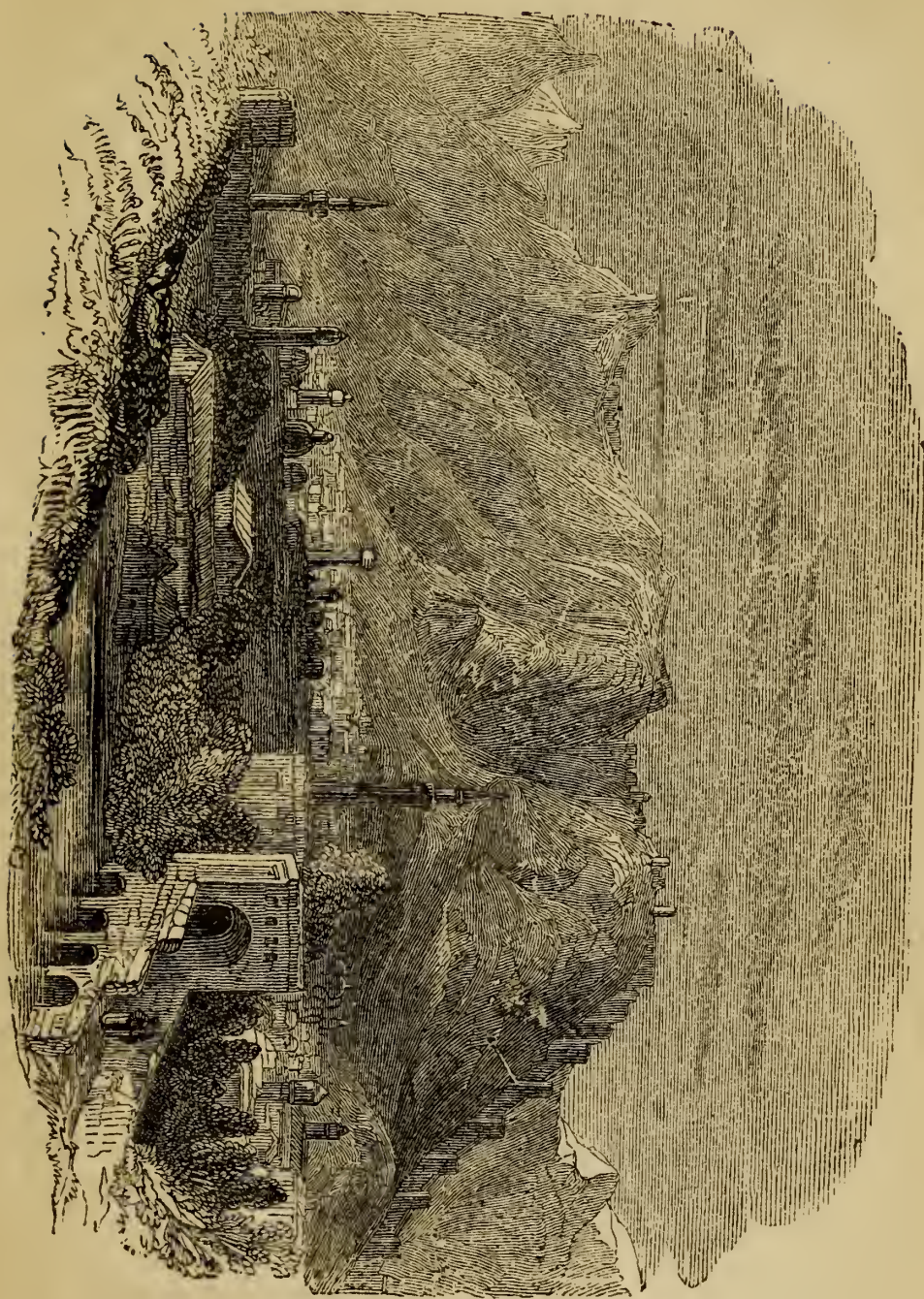
The gospel continued to be diffused, first among the Jews, and also among the Grecians or Gentiles. The town of Antioch in Syria is particularly mentioned. This had been the capital of that province from the time of its foundation under Alexander's successors. It was then a large and fortified city, backed by lofty hills; now it is a mere village, though picturesquely situated. The modern town of Antioch was destroyed by an earthquake in 1822; previous to that time it contained about four thousand inhabitants, filling about one-fifth part of the old city; but it was badly built, and had often suffered from former devastations of the same kind. Traces of ancient splendour, however, may still be seen; such as the remains of a castle with semicircular turrets, and also three or four churches. Some solid walls also then were standing;

these were situated on the summit and north side of two hills, and on the plain between these hills and the river. Pocock speaks of the arch which joins these hills as having probably been a part of the wall built by Seleucus; though, in other places, pieces of Roman brick are visible. The south side is more exposed, but is guarded by natural precipices. The neighbouring country is rich in mulberry trees and vineyards, though the consecrated bay trees and cypress groves, famous in ancient times, have long since passed away. The banks of the river Orontes display a succession of pleasing scenery, interspersed with a few wretched dwellings. Antioch, once called the "Queen of the East," no longer deserves that name; nor the still more honourable appellation of Theopolis, or "the city of God," given to it A. D. 518, because most of its inhabitants were Christians. Here the disciples first received the appellation of CHRISTIANS, Acts xi. 26: it is not stated expressly whether it was given by friends or enemies. This honourable name is sometimes sadly misused; surely those who bear it should cultivate the graces of love, patience, perseverance, and heavenly-mindedness, for which the first disciples were eminent. "See how these Christians love one another," was then a frequent remark from worldlings; and why should it be otherwise now?

One instance of brotherly intercourse is especially recorded; the visit of Barnabas, whose kindness at the first conversion of Saul, when under the suspicions of his brethren, Acts ix. 26, 27, must not be wholly passed over. He seems to have been of a friendly and cheerful spirit, "the son of consolation," as his name implies; and his good advice, Acts xi. 23, was suitable to it.

The world's a room of sickness, where each heart
Knows its own anguish and unrest:
The truest wisdom there, and noblest art,
Is his who skills of comfort best.

New hearts before the Saviour's feet to lay,
This is his first, his dearest joy:
The next, from heart to heart to clear the way
For mutual love, without alloy.



Barnabas was afterwards the regular companion of Saul, to whom he seems to have been specially attached. The latter had been preaching at Tarsus, his native place, probably the scene of his early classical acquirements and ambitious dreams. No account is given of his ministrations there, or personal connexions. The Christian whom he called his mother, Rom. xvi. 13, was probably some pious, elderly, and respectable female, 1 Tim. v. 2.

The conversion of Saul must, at this time, have been a striking evidence that the Christian religion was a revelation from God. He could not have been himself an impostor or an enthusiast, for he evidently was not influenced by the hope of advancing his interest, credit, or authority; neither by the prospect of indulging some passion or appetite. As T. H. Horne states, "Those whom he left were the disposers of wealth, dignity, and power, in Judæa; those to whom he went were indigent and oppressed." The same writer adds: "That he had great zeal, both when a Jew and when a Christian, cannot be denied; but he was so much master of his temper, as to become all things to all men, as far as his duty to God would permit: a conduct compatible neither with the stiffness of a bigot, nor with the violent impulses of fanatical delusion. He was as free from vanity as any man that ever lived; he says that he is the chief of sinners, and he prefers, in the strongest terms, Christian love or universal benevolence to faith, prophecy, miracles, and all the gifts and graces with which he could be endowed. Neither could he have been deceived by the fraud of others." The book which was penned in consequence of the effect produced, by considering the history of Paul, on the mind of lord Lyttelton, who was once a celebrated opposer of religion, should here be mentioned: it has been truly said, that infidelity has never been able to fabricate a specious answer to it.

About A. D. 38, it is supposed that Matthew penned his Gospel, which, though written in Greek, was especially intended for the use of the Jewish nation, and contains much suitable both to the followers of Jesus, and their

persecutors at this period, as T. H. Horne shows in his analysis of that Gospel. They were reminded that their Lord had forewarned them of trials and sufferings, Matt. x. 21—36; xvi. 24; v. 10—12; xxiv. 9—13; had cautioned them against sinful shrinking from persecution, ch. x. 28, 32—39; but exhorted them to use lawful means of safety, and to a blameless, consistent life, ch. x. 16, 17, 23; v. 39, 13—20. Above all, to a constant and believing hope of future happiness, ch. xvi. 25—27; x. 28; while their harsh and bigoted countrymen were shown the importance of meekness and benevolence, ch. v. 43—48; xviii. 23—35; v. 7—9; x. 40—42; xxv. 31—46. They were also reminded of the judgments which awaited them, if they continued in their sinful course, ch. xxiii., xxiv. This written record of their Lord must indeed have been valuable to the Christians, and necessary, now they were dispersed among strangers. It is generally considered that Matthew preached in Ethiopia, and was martyred there; but his history, as given by tradition, is mixed with much that is uncertain. Some writers give a later date, A. D. 61, to the Gospel which he wrote. The reader will remember that his original employment was that of a publican or tax-gatherer, Matt. ix. 9.

An interesting allusion is made to the appearance of some Jewish prophets at Antioch. A commentator says, "According to the original word to call them by, they were men Divinely warned: probably some eminent disciples, who, though not called to the apostolic office, yet acted under others, in the ministry of the word, 1 Cor. xii. 28. And in relation to their prophecy of dearth 'over the land,' as it should be rendered, it is a truth which should always be kept in view, that the Lord is as much a God of providence as the God of grace to his people. This famine gave occasion for the exercise of Christian love. Thus the Lord overrules circumstances of seeming evil to real good; and in the diversities of character and station affords opportunity for calling into exercise the various graces of the Holy Spirit."

The mention of this famine is also remarkable, as confirmed by the testimony of some contemporary heathen

historians. Four years of famine occurred at intervals during the reign of Claudius Cæsar.

The facts which are recorded in Acts xii. are also attested by Jewish historians. Herod Agrippa, grandson to the prince named in Matt. ii., is commended in the writings of Josephus for his easy disposition and willingness to gratify the Jews; he was also favoured by the Romans, and with their permission resumed the persecution of the Christians. James, the son of Zebedee, was the first of the apostles who was called to suffer martyrdom. He was slain by the sword, not crucified, which was a mode of punishment used only under the government of the Romans. No scriptural account of his last moments can be quoted; but an old writer says, that the man who had drawn him before the tribunal afterwards became a penitent, and was beheaded at the same time with the apostle, asking his forgiveness, which was readily given. Such cases there were among the early Christians.

The next step Herod took was to imprison Peter, purposing to kill him as soon as the solemnities of the pass-over should be ended. The name of Easter was that of a heathen festival kept at this season in Britain. The apostle was closely confined; and sixteen soldiers were appointed to watch him, and relieve each other. But man's extremity is God's opportunity: no bolts, no guards, can hinder the progress of prayer, or the gracious dealings of the Lord. Frequent and earnest petitions had been made for Peter: it seems that the Christians never assembled without remembering his case—and they were heard and answered. The presence of the Lord gives peace even in a dungeon. Peter was now enabled to fulfil his resolve, to follow Jesus to prison and to death, calmly sleeping on the night which was to have ended in his execution, as did many of the martyrs in our own land. But he was suddenly released by the visit of an angel.

He dreams he sees a lamp flash bright,
Glancing around his prison room;
But 'tis a gleam of heavenly light,
That fills up all the ample gloom.

The flame that, in a few short years,
 Deep through the chambers of the dead
 Shall pierce and dry the fount of tears,
 Is waving o'er his dungeon bed.

Touch'd, he upstarts, his chains unbind;
 Through darksome vault, up massy stair,
 His dizzy, doubting footsteps wind
 To freedom, and cool moonlight air.

Then all himself, all joy and calm,
 Though for awhile his hand forego,
 Just as it touch'd the martyr's palm,
 He turns him to his task below.

Let the reader peruse the details given, Acts xii. 3—19. The close of the narrative is among those natural illustrations of character which at once come home to the feelings; and the number of individuals whose names are mentioned in the narrative, is an additional evidence of its truth. The idea of spirits sometimes appearing as messengers from a departed person has not been extinct in any age or clime; it especially prevailed in the east. Those can best realize the joy of these Christians assembled for prayer who have, like them, rejoiced in the restoration of pious friends, if not from a prison, yet from the borders of the grave. They can say—

When we review our dismal fears,
 'Twas hard to think they'd vanish so;
 With God we left our flowing tears,
 He makes our joys like rivers flow.

What became of Peter? It is not said whither he retired; and though his history forms a prominent feature in the previous portion of the Acts of the apostles, he is not mentioned again, except as taking an active part in the first general council, chap. xv. He is repeatedly mentioned in the Epistles of Paul, and is called the apostle of the circumcision, Gal. ii.; that is, of the Jews and Jewish proselytes, who were among his earliest converts, and to whom his first Epistle seems to have been chiefly addressed. As Leighton states, "Though Divine truths are to be received equally from every minister, yet there

is something of a more acceptable reception of those who were at first the means of bringing men to God, than of others: like the opinion some have of physicians whom they love."

His second epistle was written at a later time, and will be noticed hereafter. The evangelist Mark was one of his disciples, 1 Pet. v. 13, and most likely wrote his Gospel under Peter's direction. It is observed, that he frequently mentions that apostle's name, and nowhere glosses over his faults, but rather omits what would tend to his credit. The person of Peter is described as tall, thin, and pale; his eyes red, from frequent weeping; and it is said that he never heard a cock crow without thinking of his sin: but no doubt he had a constant remembrance also of the forgiving love of Christ.

Herod, finding that Peter was gone, caused the keepers of his prison to be put to death. Thus the wicked try to silence where they cannot gainsay, but all in vain; for if God be on our side, who can be against us? This tyrant was himself shortly after called to stand before God, just as he was in the zenith of his pride and power, celebrating at Cæsarea some public games in honour of Cæsar, and receiving the homage of those who owned him as their ruler. Josephus, who was then a boy, either wilfully or ignorantly gives far too favourable a picture of this monarch; and here is an instance of the difference between sacred and profane history. He describes the splendid attire worn on this occasion, made of silver tissue, "which being illuminated by the fresh reflection of the sun's rays shone out after a surprising manner; and presently his flatterers cried out, that he was a god; and they added, 'Be thou merciful to us, for although we have hitherto revered thee only as a man, yet we shall henceforward own thee as superior to mortal nature.' Upon this the king did neither rebuke them nor reject their impious flattery. But as he presently afterwards looked up, he saw an owl sitting on a certain rope over his head—(a Christian writer says, he saw the angel which the Lord sent to smite him)—and immediately understood that this bird was the messenger of ill tidings, and fell into the

deepest sorrow. He looked upon his friends and said, 'I, whom you call a god, am commanded presently to depart this life, while Providence thus reproves the lying words you just now said to me.' Other monarchs had received and encouraged similar flatterers; but not those professing to know the God of Israel, as Herod did; and he was signally punished. He was eaten of worms, and gave up the ghost, after suffering terrible pains for five days." Who can read the history recorded in Acts xii. without desiring "rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin," however splendid or infatuating, "for a season?"

A modern writer says: "It was by an abundant effusion of the Holy Spirit, not by any natural inherent goodness of their own, that the primitive Christians were made to differ from others. It is by the agency of the same Spirit, through his ordinary operations, that every believer of the present day thankfully acknowledges that a new heart is created within him. And it is by a yet more abundant effusion of the Holy Ghost, that the great mass of mankind will truly and effectually be gathered into the fold of Christ. There is no difficulty in conceiving, had it been agreeable to the purposes of the Most High so to have ordered matters, that all men in the apostolic age might have been made like-minded with the primitive believers, and that the gospel might have been universally received, instead of being universally rejected. The heart of a Herod or a Felix might, through the Spirit, have been as effectually turned to the knowledge and love of the truth, as the heart of a Peter and Paul. All this may be easily conceived; for who shall presume to limit the extent of the Divine operations?"



ELYMAS THE SORCERER STRUCK BLIND.

CHAPTER IV.

PAUL ON HIS FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY—THE FIRST CHRISTIAN COUNCIL.

PLEASANT it is to turn from the court of Herod to the Christians at Antioch. Several are distinctly named, Acts xiii. 1: Lucius, probably St. Luke; Manaen, the foster-brother of that Herod referred to, Matt. xiv., and perhaps the son of a famous Jew of the same name; Simeon, or Niger, supposed to have been an African of swarthy complexion—but the grace of God is free to sinners of every class and country; Barnabas, and Saul. The two latter were set apart, by the command of the Holy Spirit, to the work of evangelizing distant lands: and from this time Saul is called Paul—probably using his Roman name while residing among the Gentiles, or else from Sergius Paulus, a Roman governor, one of his first converts. They were accompanied by John Mark, the youthful nephew of Barnabas, probably a different person from Mark the evangelist, the pupil of Peter.

Of their first missionary visits the accounts are brief. At Paphos, an island infamous for a heathen temple in honour of Venus, the deputy or governor, Sergius Paulus, seems to have been truly awakened: he desired to hear the word of God; not merely from interest or curiosity, like some rulers before whom Paul afterwards pleaded. Yet there was an enemy here; a false prophet, or sorcerer, called Elymas, whom Paul severely reproved, and who was struck with blindness as a punishment for his sinful opposition. When we rebuke transgressors, let us like Paul be influenced by the Spirit of God, and not give reproofs beyond what we are warranted to communicate.

Leaving the islands, and returning to the continent of Asia, John Mark quitted the apostles, going probably to the house of his widowed mother in Jerusalem. Paul and Barnabas went to another Antioch, in Pisidia—there were several towns of that name, built by the Syrian kings named Antiochus—and there, according to the Jewish custom, they attended the synagogue worship, and were asked to address the people. A full abstract of Paul's discourse is given; his appeals to numerous passages of Scripture, his free and simple statement of gospel truth, and his plain yet solemn warnings, are patterns to every Christian teacher. The eager attention of the hearers, their increasing numbers, and the envy and opposition of their formal and self-righteous neighbours, "when they saw the multitudes," have ever been exemplified where the truth is faithfully preached for the first time. The account agrees with the language of the poet:—

"Would I describe a preacher such as Paul,
 Were he on earth, would hear, approve, and own—
 Paul should himself direct me. I would trace
 His master strokes, and draw from his design.
 I would express him simple, grave, sincere,
 In doctrine uncorrupt, his language plain,
 And plain in manner; decent, solemn, chaste,
 And natural in gesture; much impressed
 Himself, as conscious of his awful charge,
 And anxious mainly, that the flock he feeds
 May feel it too: affectionate in look,
 And tender in address, as well becomes
 A messenger of grace to guilty men."

That some were impressed, was manifested by their desire to hear these truths on the next sabbath, or, as the original signifies, in the week or between the sabbaths. The Jews and proselytes were wont to assemble for public worship twice during the week, so that three days should not pass without an opportunity of hearing the word of God. Some useful observations on this practice are given in "The Rites and Worship of the Jews." Week-day services are ever prized by those who are in earnest about their souls. Many, like the pious Joseph Williams, in his youth, have found the religious impressions of the sabbath "remain all the Monday morning, or for two or three days after;" but, he adds, "towards the end of the week, my zeal began to cool, and my prayers to be formal and lifeless." And others, in the midst of pressing business, have found it refreshing to turn from the house of business to the house of God. Such privileges are not rare in this favoured land; but how little are they prized, and how different are they from the mere formal repetition of daily prayers which many have urged.

The persecutions Paul and Barnabas underwent at Antioch and Iconium, with the opposition excited by the Jews, are briefly stated, but they were not trifling in themselves; they are alluded to in 2 Tim. iii. 10—12. It would be gratifying to know the individual histories of those concerned, but it is useless to speculate about them; and the legend of Thecla, a supposed female convert of Iconium, is wholly undeserving of credit.

A farther detail is given as to the transactions at Lystra. Here Paul healed a cripple, having perceived, by his gift of discerning spirits, that this man had faith to be healed. The miracle drew universal attention. Paul and Barnabas were proclaimed to be heathen deities: the latter, perhaps the most dignified in appearance, was styled Jupiter; Paul, the most eloquent, was addressed as Mercury. In common with other pagan nations, the men of Lycaonia believed that their gods had formerly visited the earth, and punished those who gave them unfavourable receptions; and they probably dreaded the recurrence of such

an event. Oxen decked with garlands were brought to be sacrificed; no doubt, as Calvin says, “the priests hoped to gain an increase of fame and riches to their temple, if it could be asserted that Jupiter had visited the spot:” and Satan, who had blinded the hearts of sinners against the numerous miracles of Jesus, was satisfied if he could keep them idolaters, though their idols were the ministers of the gospel. Perhaps he is best pleased when he can induce Christians to make idols of their teachers; and the caution of the aged apostle applies to every species of idol and sort of idolatry, “Little children, keep yourselves from idols.” Such regard is most painful to the faithful minister of Christ, who is ready to join in the exclamation of the apostle. How did Paul and Barnabas abide this treatment? They rent their clothes, and ran into the gathering crowd, calling aloud, “Sirs, why do ye these things? we also are men of like passions with you.” Thus they dissuaded them from their purpose, and sought to lead them to the living God, who made all things, thus beginning with the very first principle of Scripture:—

“Him blind antiquity profaned, not served,
 With self-taught rites, and under various names,
 Female and male, Pomona, Pales, Pan,
 And Flora, and Vertumnus; peopling earth
 With tutelary goddesses and gods
 That were not: and commending as they would
 To each, some province, garden, field, or grove.
 But all are under one. One Spirit—His
 Who wore the platted thorns with bleeding brows—
 Rules universal nature. Not a flower,
 But shows some touch, in freckle, streak, or stain,
 Of his unrivall'd pencil. He inspires
 Their balmy odours, and imparts their hues.—COWPER.

The fickle people, influenced by some of the former persecutors of Paul, the Jews of Antioch and Iconium, actually were persuaded, in a very short time, to stone the man they had just regarded as a god. Paul seemed to be dead, but was probably in a swoon, and the next day he recovered, and left the city. Who would value popular favour, thus transitory and uncertain? Even to our

blessed Lord, in the same week, the Jewish multitudes cried "Hosanna," and "Crucify him!" The servant is not greater than his Lord. Nor is this unstable spirit confined to professors of religion. The reader will remember the case of captain Cook, who visited the Sandwich islands, and allowed himself to be worshipped there, but was afterwards killed by the same natives. Who, then, would value the praise of men, more than the praise of God! As a contemporary writer remarked, from the moment that able navigator allowed this act of worship, all went wrong; mistakes and mishaps succeeded rapidly, till he fell a victim.

One fact connected with this tour must not be omitted. Among St. Paul's converts were, most likely, Lois and Eunice, the grandmother and mother of Timothy, Acts xvi. 2, 3; 2 Tim. i. 5. His father probably remained a heathen—at least, nothing is ever said to prove that he was a believer, or even a proselyte. The children of Jewesses married to Gentile husbands were often untaught in the word of God; but Timothy was not neglected. The early history of Chrysostom and Augustine was in some respects similar; and there are numberless other instances, in which the promise, "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old he will not depart from it," Prov. xxii. 6, has been equally fulfilled. Dr. Doddridge, when a child, learned the history of the Old and New Testament, from the prints on the Dutch tiles round the fire-place, where his mother usually sat; and the rev. J. Newton describes to a friend the pleasure he felt in repeating the words of David, "O Lord, truly I am thy servant, and the son of thine handmaid; thou hast loosed my bonds:" and adds, "Though I turned away all the advantages of these early impressions, yet it was very long before I could shake them off; and when the Lord opened my eyes, I found a great benefit from the recollection of them."

Paul now returned to Antioch, from whence he had set out, having revisited and encouraged the newly-awakened believers to whom the gospel had been blessed. Now Satan strove to disturb the early Christian church, not

only by persecution from without, but by false brethren within, Acts xv. 1; Gal. ii. 4; who, under pretence of zeal for the Mosaic ritual, would have led the converts to a self-righteous spirit, thinking to justify themselves by the works of the law, instead of seeking mercy from Jesus, "without money and without price." Edwards, in his History of Redemption, has beautifully shown that the Mosaic ceremonies could not be adopted by all the world, or by people scattered to a distance from Jerusalem; and that the clouds and shadows had gradually rolled away, as the true light began to appear: but it was natural that many Jewish teachers should desire what would tend to aggrandize their nation, and repel what was contrary to their former ideas. The whole was turned to the furtherance of the gospel; and thus, even in the earliest times, this great truth was established, that "in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love." The subject was agitated at Antioch. Paul, with Barnabas and others, repaired to Jerusalem to consult the apostles and elders. In church history, this is called the first general council; it was perhaps also the last where it could truly be said, "It seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us." Nothing could be more dissimilar than the councils even of the earlier centuries: and of the Romish councils, in later times, at Constance, Trent, etc., nothing need be said; Romanist writers say enough of them to show that the Spirit of God was not there.

At this assembly in Jerusalem, after much discussion, Peter rose, and said what was much to the purpose, and what he was well qualified to state, having been the first who was expressly commissioned to preach to the Gentiles. He showed what St. Paul afterwards wrote more fully, Rom. i., iv., x., that there is no difference, before God, between Jew and Gentile; all are under sin, and "the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him." Here was no affectation of superiority, but a plain appeal to the minds and consciences of those he addressed. Yet, while Peter's conduct on this occasion must be commended, it is painful to add that he erred afterwards through dissimulation

on this very point, so as to call forth the just censures of Paul, who referred to it as a warning, when writing to a Christian church, which had also departed from the simplicity which is in Christ, Gal. ii. 11. Observe, however, that in this matter Paul withstood Peter to his face: he did not flatter and afterwards backbite him; but the reproof on this occasion seems to have been both given and received in a right spirit. The Epistle to the Galatians may be read with reference to this council. The Galatians were among Paul's early converts, as appears from the circumstances mentioned in the epistle, which is incorrectly said to have been written from Rome, and should rather be dated about three years after this time, or A. D. 53. Here let it be remembered, that the notices subjoined to the Epistles are no part of the sacred writings themselves, and differ in the ancient manuscript copies.

Paul and Barnabas supported the doctrine stated by Peter, referring to what they had seen and heard at a distance from Judæa. Thus the real experience of the servants of God will be found to agree, wherever they have been placed. James next spoke, in a brief but impressive manner, quoting Amos ix. 11, 12. And probably John also added similar sentiments, as his name is mentioned, Gal. ii. 9. It is almost needless to remark, that this James was not the son of Zebedee, but the kinsman or relative of our blessed Lord, usually called James the Just, who continued at Jerusalem long after this council, but suffered martyrdom a short time before that city was destroyed. A letter was accordingly written to the believers at Antioch, which is given at length, Acts xv. 23—30, laying down no other regulations, except the abstinence from fornication, a sin to which the heathen were awfully prone; and from blood, and things offered to idols—a reasonable and just accommodation to the feelings of their Jewish brethren. And let it be observed, that the opinion thus given was that of “the apostles, and elders, and brethren” of “the whole church,” or congregation of faithful men. How much joy this letter must have diffused at Antioch! Before proceeding further,

some particulars as to the early Christian customs might be interesting; but, after all, a careful perusal of the Acts and the Epistles will give more correct ideas than a reference to any human authors. The researches of Bingham, Lardner, and others, have rendered the general reader familiar with the names and opinions of "the fathers," as they are called; but it should never be forgotten that symptoms of corruption appeared in the Christian church at a very early period. Even the Epistles of the New Testament refer to heresies and errors which already existed; and these were still more evident in the age which followed. At the time of the death of Christ, true religion was unknown to the whole heathen world; the Jews were the only people to whom were committed the oracles of God; and it is not surprising that, among those nurtured in idolatry, many wrong notions should be found, even after they had become enlightened as to the main points or essentials of religion, while even the converted Jews clung too closely to their old forms and ritual. How weak, then, is the practice of turning to such for guidance in these days, when the knowledge of the truth is best communicated in the most simple form, even the words of Scripture, and statements strictly in accordance therewith. Such instruction, from the word of God itself, may safely be imparted even to the uneducated classes.

Those who are desirous of more information relative to these "fathers," will find much to interest and much to pain in Osburn's work respecting them, and in Taylor's *Ancient Christianity*, and other works on ecclesiastical history.

It has been truly said: "Admitting the value of the works of the fathers, the best of them were but the writings of uninspired men. Painful indeed is the interest with which the reflecting reader passes from the last writers of the New Testament to the earliest of the fathers. He may enter upon this new field with much of the feelings of Adam when he quitted paradise, and entered upon this wide earth; and if the ground is not cursed, yet is it, comparatively speaking, unblessed. Far

from plucking from the tree of life in all security, and gathering his fruit in leisurely gladness, he has now to eat his bread in the sweat of his brow, painfully to select wholesome from amid noxious, and to pass over much ground for but little store. Legitimate types are to be adopted from a heap of fanciful allegory; good reasons from a tissue of loose argument; and credible facts from much careless assertion."

Oh, how unlike the complex works of man,
Heaven's easy, artless, unencumber'd plan.
No meretricious graces to beguile,
No clustering ornaments to clog the pile:
From ostentation as from weakness free,
It stands, like the cerulean arch we see,
Majestic in its own simplicity.



CHAPTER V.

DISPUTE BETWEEN PAUL AND BARNABAS — MACE-
DONIA — PHILIPPI — THESSALONICA — THE BEREANS
— ATHENS — CORINTH.

THE church at Antioch continued to exist till the seventh century, when it was destroyed by the Saracens, or Mohammedans. Ignatius, the friend and disciple of St. John, who was killed by lions in a Roman amphitheatre, was bishop of this place for many years.

It was not possible for Paul to forget his absent converts; and he proposed to Barnabas to revisit them. A sharp disagreement then arose, as to whether or not John Mark should accompany them. It is considered that Barnabas was too much influenced by partiality to his nephew, who had once forsaken the work in which he was engaged; though duty towards an elderly parent might be pleaded in his excuse. Paul was naturally of a sanguine disposition; and, as Scott observes, this must have needed regulation, and would be one of the infirmities to which the apostle himself alludes, although it must have greatly increased the fervour and efficiency of his ministerial labours. Thus, in this fallen world, good is ever mixed with evil. This separation of two affectionately-attached Christian friends should warn others to guard their respective tempers, while it was overruled for the further dispersion of the truth. Paul, in subsequent years, speaks with commendation of both Barnabas and Mark, 2 Tim. iv. 11; Col. iv. 10.

It is generally considered that in this disagreement Paul was right, because the support and encouragement he received from his Christian brethren is particularly noticed. However, the believer will not fail to observe the providence of God, who can overrule even the infirmities of his ministering servants to contribute to the further diffusion of his truth. As a skilful gardener at

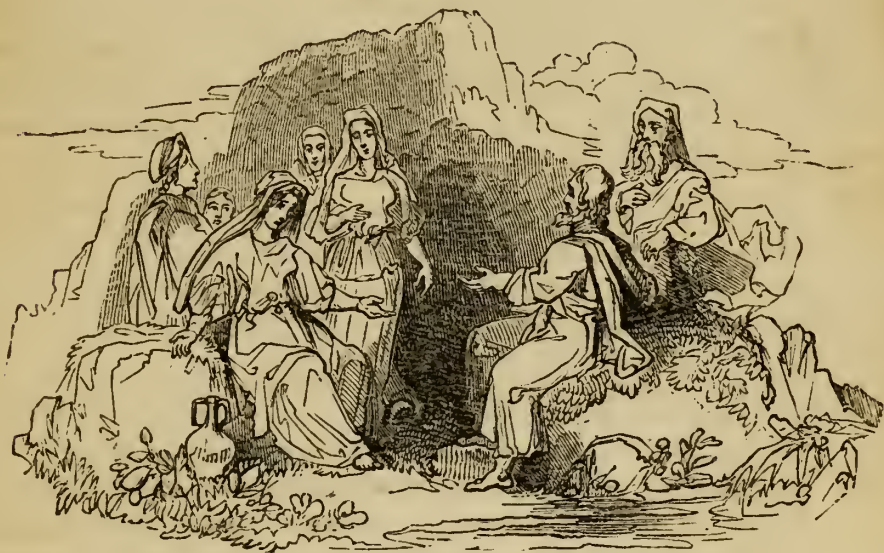
first will keep his young plants in the same spot, that he may the more carefully watch over them, and afterwards will separate them that they may thrive in different parts of the ground which he cultivates; thus the Lord has ever dealt with his people. Though alike in essential features and early training, yet all possess some minor differences: these frequently form grounds for separation, and each has his own part to sustain in this world of changes and uncertainty. Perfect union will never be found, except in heaven; but those who hope there to join in the same delightful strains, should seek here, far more than is usually done, to cultivate a spirit of peace and love, and to unite with all real followers of Christ.

“Why should we differ by the way,
And let contentions come?
We hope to spend an endless day
In one eternal home.”

Accompanied by Silas, Paul visited the places where he had formed churches, to whom he gave the determinations of the apostles. He visited Derbe and Lystra, and there received the youthful Timothy as his associate, probably the son of one of his former hearers. He was a young man of good education and character; he is afterwards mentioned in terms of strong affection, Phil. ii. 19, as well as in the two Epistles which bear his name, and which contain much valuable instruction for every minister. Doubtless, the varied advice and treatment which Titus and Timothy received from Paul were carefully suited to their natural characters and circumstances: compare Acts xvi. 3; Gal. ii. 3; also 2 Tim. iii. 24; Titus i. 13. The diligent and self-denying habits of Timothy are commended by early writers.

After ineffectual attempts to proceed in other directions, Paul received a message, which he at once understood to be a Divine call to preach the gospel in Europe: “Come over into Macedonia, and help us.” He readily obeyed; though, perhaps, it was a severe trial to him to find no immediate prospect of success. A few females were accustomed to meet on the sabbath in an oratory or

proseucha, by a river side, near Philippi: and to them Paul went and preached the gospel. One convert only is expressly mentioned—Lydia, a seller of purple from Thyatira, who had probably been brought to Macedonia for some purpose connected with her trade.



It is not said whether the purple which she sold was the famous “purple Tyrian dye,” extracted from the juice of a certain shell-fish found in the Mediterranean—the city of Thyatira is still famous for dyeing cloth; or whether it was the purple silk or cloth prized for garments in the east; or the purple or blue fringes with which the Jews bordered their garments, Numb. xv. 37—41, and which they were careful only to buy of persons duly licensed: most probably it was the former. She was baptized, and her household; and she constrained Paul and his companions, including the evangelist Luke, to become her guests; doubtless she found a blessing in so doing, according to the words of Christ, Matt. x. 41, 42.

Historians have recorded many instances in which the Jews obtained licenses to build places of worship near the water-side, which they desired for the sake of their ablutions, and, as it is stated, “there to observe the sabbaths, and perform the sacred rites according to the Jewish law; and if any man, whether magistrate or private person, give

them any let, or disturbance, he shall pay a fine to the city." Such a place was found in the neighbourhood of Philippi. It has given an enduring fame and interest to the ruin which bears its name; though its Roman splendours, and the traces of two mighty battles, are now passed away.

The Spirit of God, who directed Paul to Europe, might have seen fit to guide his course elsewhere—for instance, to China—and the difficulties in his way might have been instantly overruled. How different then would have been the events of after ages!

Oh, had the Vision call'd, in that deep dream,
Paul eastward to have borne the sacred theme;
With Heaven's rich gifts to feed the Tartar wild,
And not the Macedonian, Europe's child,—
Had no kind spirit, casting fears behind,
Whose heart the light contain'd, (for all mankind,)
Beheld where England's snow-white cliffs appear'd,
And boldly to the barbarous Britons steer'd,—
How had our savage faith its strength maintain'd,
And what, if here, the night e'en now had reign'd?
What might so soon God's sleeping wrath awake,
And o'er our isle tempt him his scourge to shake,
His lamp remove, his heritage forsake,
As languor to extend the gospel sound,
The bread of life, to starving nations round?

Perhaps none of the Epistles of Paul contain deeper evidences of friendly feeling than that which was addressed to the Philippians, about twelve years after he left them; as if the persecutions he there underwent had endeared him and his converts to each other. The good seed had been sown in tears. Paul was repeatedly accosted by a female slave, who was influenced by an evil spirit to utter prophecies or divinations; she recognised the apostles as servants of God, perhaps hoping that they might be brought into discredit by this testimony. Paul needed not Satan to be his witness; and having expelled the demon, by the name of Jesus Christ, he was seized by her exasperated masters who had made profit by her. Paul was falsely accused to the magistrates, severely beaten, and cast into prison, with his companion Silas.

Those who do good by drawing men from sin are often reviled as troublers of the people: witness the prophets in ancient times, and the British martyrs in later ages. The sufferings of the latter nearly resembled those of the former, who were “cast into the inner prison, (most likely a pit or dungeon,) and their feet made fast in the stocks.” In former days, prisons were not clean, airy, and well regulated, as they are now. In many places, even the best of men were exposed to sufferings, which it is now considered unnecessary and undesirable to inflict on the vilest malefactors.

Though these prisons were exceedingly loathsome and offensive, no adverse circumstances can separate the Christian from his ever present Lord. In this doleful situation, Paul and Silas were able to occupy themselves in prayer and praise; and their fellow-prisoners heard them engage in those sweet exercises which are the very breath of the believer’s life. Such men will never be found in any place where they cannot look up to God for his blessing. How different was the state of their rough jailer. He seems to have felt some ill will towards their religion: possibly he thought they should not escape from prison, as some other Christians (see Acts iv.) had appeared to do. Having made them fast, as he thought, he slept securely, till aroused by a tremendous earthquake, which shook the walls and fastenings of the prison. Dreading the loss of his credit, he was about to commit suicide, which the heathens in their ignorance thought honourable; but Paul prevented this: then, struck with remorse and compunction, he brought his two Christian prisoners out, and fell at their feet, inquiring, “What must I do to be saved?” This is the most important question in the whole Bible; nor is there a more valuable statement than Paul’s reply: “Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.” It was a brief and comprehensive sermon, in a few words: to which he added, “and thy house.” Like faithful Abraham, every believer will desire to command his children and household, to keep the way of the Lord. Some Christians are at once like Lydia, drawn by love to the gospel; others, like this jailer,

at first resist, but afterwards submit with fear and trembling, weeping and supplication.



The events which followed are simply and briefly told. How anxious now was this keeper to refresh those whom he had lately ill used ; how happily would the remaining hours of night pass away in spiritual conversation—refreshing to the awakened sinner, as cold waters to a thirsty soul ! The jailer at once made a profession of Christianity ; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway. How delightful it is to see converts thus come forward, Isa. xlv. 4, 5.

The morning dawned, and the magistrates sent word to liberate Paul and Silas ; but they pleaded their privilege as Roman citizens, to be openly acquitted, as uncondemned. This could not be denied ; and then, after a short interview with Lydia, and others, they thought it best to withdraw from Philippi. But they had done the work for which God had sent them there : they had sown good seed ; and, before many years elapsed, a flourishing Christian church was here established, which is honourably mentioned, as the only place from whence relief was sent to Paul when a prisoner at Rome, Phil. i. 1 ; iv. 14—16. Nor did the sufferings he there endured, for a moment impede his efforts to benefit others, 1 Thess. ii. 2—4.

Paul and his companions proceeded to Thessalonica, now Salonichi, a town beautifully situated in the woody and mountainous country of Macedonia, not far from the celebrated vale of Tempe, which is described as somewhat resembling Dovedale, in Derbyshire. Dr. Clarke spent some time there in 1801, and mentions the ruins of several ancient buildings and inscriptions relating to some Roman emperors: he says that he visited a Turkish mosque, which contained a pulpit of very antique marble, a mineral common to this district, in which St. Paul is said to have preached in a subterranean vault or chapel there. The same traveller observed that the city still included among its inhabitants a number of turbulent Jews, as in the days of St. Paul; and perhaps their synagogues were not unlikely to be the spots visited by him. Both here, and at Berea, the apostle's first efforts were directed to his countrymen, and from them his chief difficulties arose: but he did not labour wholly in vain; and females are expressly mentioned, in both places, as deriving benefit from his ministry. Of them, like their Christian sisters in Judæa, it might be truly said, in the words of a modern authoress, "Theirs was not a mere holiday profession, or a transient emotion; it was not a tribute to the eloquence of Paul, the earnestness of Peter, or the sweetness of John: it was a principle that triumphed over weakness, and bestowed a supernatural courage; that enabled even the delicate and tender woman to meet the severest trial, and to stretch forth her hand for the martyr's crown."

A minister of the present day describes the manner in which, to judge from the apostle's writings, Paul must have alluded to the Old Testament prophecies of Christ, and how his hearers received the word with all readiness of mind: it was the word of God, and they hesitated not to receive it. "We see," he says, "the readers and ministers of the synagogue, standing with the books of their Scriptures unrolled before them, in the midst of the assembly, and turning to one portion after another of the sacred record, as the eloquent speaker proceeded in his address; and those that heard him were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake. The open

Bible, the Bible kept open, is the useful Bible: the Bible open when you are quietly sitting in the midst of the great congregation; open and constantly referred to while your minister addresses you; open when you return home, to recall the preaching of your minister, and to instruct your household; open when alone in the retirement of your closet, when you search your own heart, and lay bare its secret recesses to the searching Spirit of God."

The Bereans were especially distinguished for their attention in searching the Scriptures: the mark of a truly noble and excellent mind, which every real Christian minister will desire to find in his congregation. He does not wish his hearers to take things on trust, without proving them from the Bible, or to place the traditions of men on a level with the word of God. Chrysostom commended the preachers who frequently cited texts of Scripture, that their hearers might thus become acquainted with these passages. The attentive study of the Bible will always bring with it its own reward; no public means or privileges can compensate for a neglect of this duty; and those who most carefully peruse its pages, will make the most progress heavenward.

Widely different from the "noble-minded" Bereans were the Athenians, whom Paul next visited, having withdrawn by sea from the persecutions which threatened him; ignorant idolaters, fickle and inconstant, looking upon Jesus and anastasis (that is, the resurrection) as new idols, like their own, whom they desired to hear of, to gratify their vain fondness for novelty, always running after news, as Demosthenes describes the Athenians in his day. There was little fruit reaped in such a soil: two converts are named, apparently persons of rank—Dionysius the Areopagite, one of their senators or judges, and a woman called Damaris, with a few others. Their neighbours seemed to have listened merely from idleness or curiosity. There are many towns now in Europe where the same effect would be produced, by a true and faithful statement of the gospel. The Epicureans and Stoics were opposite parties: the one indulging in sensual pleasures, and the

other boasting of their self-imposed austerities, like the Jewish Sadducees and Pharisees.

The account which history gives of the Athenians well agrees with the slight outline traced in Acts xvii. One old author says, there were more idols in Athens than in all the rest of Greece; and that, in this city, it was easier to find a god than a man. Others speak of their festival in honour of the deities with which they were unacquainted, as well as the observances paid to those which were generally worshipped by the heathen world. Paul took occasion, from their worshipping the unknown God, to speak to them respecting the one living and true God—unknown to these polite heathen, and to many in latter times, who delight in studying their works. This discourse was delivered in the famous court called Areopagus, on Mars' hill, an interesting spot, as Dr. Clarke describes it: he stood on the open summit of the lofty hill, the canopy of heaven above; before him was a vast extent of mountains, islands, seas, and skies; behind him, the lofty Acropolis or citadel, with its many temples. All was calculated to try the sincerity of the preacher, and to impress the mind with thoughts of that God who made the world, and all it contains, and in whom we live, and move, and have our being. The manner in which Paul readily quoted the Grecian poets might not prove any depth of erudition in that day, when the Greek language was generally diffused; but it showed that he was far from having an ungraceful or displeasing address.

A modern missionary says, "I once asked a young Greek, of the name of Koondures, if he could furnish any information relative to the altar erected to the unknown God. 'I will tell thee,' said he, 'what I have heard. In ancient times there was at Athens a direful pestilence. The poor Athenians were all but desperate. What to do they could not imagine. To every god they had applied, and yet the plague, like an insatiable hydra, was fast depopulating the city. At length it occurred to them, that perhaps the pestilence might have been sent by some deity not yet known to them, and who was angry because not honoured in that great city. To make sure work,

they erected one altar more, and inscribed the words cited by Paul—"To the unknown God." All this seems natural; how far it may be true is not easily determinable. An ancient Greek writer mentions an altar at Athens with the inscription, "To the unknown God."

The same traveller has given an account of his visit to the spot called Mars' hill, and says: "There are still to be seen vestiges of the seats of the Areopagites, cut out in the rock after a semicircular form; and around the seats an esplanade, which served as a hall. Behind, are seen small recesses, probably the niches of Athenian idols."

"You are preparing in Athens a monument more noble and durable than yonder temple," was recently said by a stranger, as he pointed out the ruins of the ancient Parthenon, to Mrs. Hill, one of the American missionaries who have gone thither to instruct the modern Greeks in the knowledge of the truth. Stephens, a traveller, who visited Athens in 1835, has given an interesting account of their efforts, especially of the female school which they opened in 1831, when, out of ninety-six scholars, not more than ten or twelve knew a letter. Athens is the capital of modern Greece, and has shared in the changes and inventions of the present times. Many would be surprised to see the advertisement of a regular *omnibus* between Athens and the Piræus, which was first printed and circulated in September, 1836.

The address of Paul to the Athenians, speaking of them as "too superstitious" in our translation, scarcely gives the full meaning of the original word. A closer rendering would be "extremely devout," or "worshippers of demons," for the demons acknowledged by the ancient Greeks were, in fact, their demi-gods or spirits of departed heroes: a practice which led the Christians of after times to reverence the remains of departed saints. To this idolatrous practice St. Paul refers, 1 Tim. iv. 1.

When Paul the walls of beauteous Athens trod,
To point its children to the unknown God:
If some refined Athenian, passing by,
Heard that new doctrine, how would he reply?
Regarding first, with polish'd scornful smile,
The stranger's figure and unclassic style;



Perceiving then the argument was bent
 Against the gods of his establishment,
 He need but cast his tutor'd eye around,
 And in that glance he has an answer found.
 There, softly blending with the evening shade,
 Less light, and less, the airy colonnade :
 Altars and theatres, and stately groves,
 Temples and deities where'er he roves :
 Here, in magnificence of Attic grace,
 Minerva's temple, rising from its base :
 Enough—the doctrine that would undermine
 These forms of beauty cannot be divine.
 Thus taste would, doubtless, intercept the view
 Of that strange thing, which, after all, was true.

These lines are important to be borne in mind, at a time when much attention is given to matters of taste and adornment, even in our places of worship. It is a solemn fact, that St. Paul and all his hearers on Mars' hill have long since passed into eternity, and that the temples and buildings which then surrounded him have for ages been laid in ruins, interesting only to the antiquarian traveller; while the idolatries and superstitions he reproved have utterly ceased.

From Athens, Paul went to Corinth, a commercial city standing on an isthmus or neck of land about six miles broad. Its situation rendered it a place of constant resort, furnished with all the luxuries and elegances of life. The ancient city had been destroyed in the year 146 B.C.; but it was rebuilt, made the seat of the Roman government in Achaia, and the residence of many wealthy merchants and learned philosophers, but still more noted for the votaries of sinful pleasures, who resorted thither from all parts. Cenchrea is the eastern port of Corinth, about eight or nine miles distant, Acts xviii. 18; Rom. xvi. 1. The neighbouring hills and precipices add to its beauty and security; and its pleasing situation, as well as its historic associations, make it interesting to the traveller.

From this place, and not from Athens, it appears that Paul wrote his two epistles to the Thessalonians, A.D. 50. Compare 1 Thess. iii. 1, 6, with Acts xviii. 6. This is shown by Paley in his *Horæ Paulinæ*, together with many other interesting points of coincidence between the Acts

and the Epistles : it is one of those books which deserve commendation, because they discover the hidden beauties of the Bible, which too many readers overlook.



CORINTH.

During his residence in this distinguished city, the apostle earned his daily bread by working at the trade of a tent-maker, which he had probably learned in Cilicia, his native province, which was famous for the goats' hair used in making tents. All Jewish youths were taught some handicraft occupation, even when they also received a learned education.

The trade which Paul followed associated him with two Jews from Rome, who pursued the same calling, Aquila and Priscilla, whose names have ever been deservedly esteemed. Whether they were Christians before leaving Rome, is not expressly asserted; but it seems that the banishment of the Jews, ordered by the emperor Claudius, was partly concerted by the enemies of Christianity in the capital, whither that faith had been early introduced, Acts ii. 10.

Probably from Aquila and Priscilla the apostle heard that account of Rome, which led him afterwards, A. D. 60,

to write the letter which is placed the first of his Epistles, either because it is the longest, or because it was addressed to the inhabitants of the metropolitan city. It is, indeed, the most systematic of all the Epistles; and treats in the most powerful manner of the great doctrines of the gospel, while it exposes the real state of the heathens and the Jews amongst whom Paul had been trained; though, like Martin Luther, he became the instrument under God of overthrowing the errors early familiar to him. Would that his testimony were more generally received; that Christian tutors would turn, as one is remembered to have done, from heathen poems of antiquity to the Greek Testament, saying, "Let us see what the word of God says on these points." The latter portion of the Epistle, which relates to believers, has a still nearer claim on our attention. The seventh chapter relates the inward contest, under which every true believer has more or less agonized. The eighth chapter has been deservedly styled an epitome of the Bible; and, to use the words of a well-known Christian female, the twelfth chapter would make a heaven of any family in which its precepts were observed.

The letters of Paul to the Corinthians should be read with reference to the character of that city, a place of wealth, business, and profligacy, yet one in which the Lord had much people, and where their temptations must have been many and various, like the dwellers in large cities at the present day. Was it not possible that they should despise the poor and unassuming tent-maker; and was it not necessary that he should evince a holy courage and firmness in reproving their errors? Still he well deserved the title which has been rightly given to him, of "a Christian and a gentleman;" and his letters to the Corinthians, especially the second Epistle, chap. ii., exhibit much refinement of manner and tenderness of feeling, even though the author was then suffering poverty and hardship, and engaged in severe labours at a distance: see chap. i. 10. The date of these Epistles, however, belongs to a later period, and they will claim attention elsewhere; but they are mentioned here as giving some idea of the character and conduct of Paul during his abode at Corinth.

How differently might he have been regarded there, had he come as a learned rabbi, or a man of skill and talent, instead of preaching "Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness."

Calvin observes: "The Lord did not use to give his oracles at random, nor was it an ordinary thing for Paul to have visions;" there was therefore some cause which rendered encouragement needful. It had been already declared that Paul should bear the name of Jesus before kings and rulers; this he was ready to do at Corinth, though another prediction was also fulfilled—"No man shall set on thee to hurt thee." Gallio was the deputy or proconsul of Achaia, or Greece Proper; the Jews, full of malice against Paul, who had been the instrument in the conversion of Crispus, the chief ruler of their synagogue, accused the apostle before this governor. He was the elder brother of the famous Seneca, and is commended by heathen writers as an amiable and honourable man. Such a feature in his character appeared in the refusal to promote the persecution of Paul; but his history is a contrast to that of Sergius Paulus, (Acts xiii.,) who evidently was impressed by the truths he heard. The virtues of the best worldlings are imperfect; Gallio showed no desire to understand the truths which Paul preached. "No! Gallio," says Hervey, "it was not a question of words and names, but one which most nearly concerned your life and the lives of all mankind." He "cared for none of these things;" though Sosthenes, an innocent person, was publicly beaten and abused. There are various opinions respecting this person; most likely he was a Christian, 1 Cor. i. 1, and the Greeks spoken of were proselytes to the Jewish religion, who were often the most vehement in its defence. Notwithstanding their opposition, Paul remained at Corinth some time, though already he had been there for a year and a half, and his labours were blessed to some depraved characters, 1 Cor. vi. 9—11. Their vices were indeed prevalent in this city in its heathen state. It is remarkable that a Christian church has outwardly existed at Corinth ever since the apostolic age.

It is not clearly stated whether Paul or Aquila had

shorn his head at Cenchrea—probably it was the former: such vows were common among the ancient Jews, and Paul had not laid aside all ceremonial observances, as will be seen, Acts xxi. His zeal in preaching the gospel was the ruling principle, however, which led him from city to city; not a mere roving, restless spirit, or love of change, but, like a celebrated general, he thought nothing done while so much yet remained to be done. This unwearied perseverance is shown by his own words, Phil. iii. 12—14.

The variety in Scripture characters is very beautiful. Apollos was naturally highly gifted as a speaker, and he was well acquainted with the Old Testament Scriptures, though not enlightened as to the ministry and atonement of Christ, “knowing only the baptism of John.” His earnestness and diligence drew the attention of Aquila and Priscilla. As Newton says, “they neither ran away from him because he was legal, nor were carried away because he was eloquent: but they took him to them, and taught him the way of God more perfectly.” Young ministers may gain much by converse with old Christians. The improvement which Apollos derived was soon evident; proceeding to Corinth he was equally useful in encouraging believers, and convincing opponents, thus watering the roots which Paul had planted there.

The date of the residence of Paul at Corinth seems to have been about A.D. 50, as the edict of Claudius, alluded to, took effect shortly before that time; and this brings it to the year of famine spoken of, Acts xi. 30. Eusebius, who wrote in the fourth century after Christ, describes this famine as having spread into Greece and other countries, as well as Judæa; and that in the former place a modius, or peck of corn, was sold for six Roman pence, or six times its usual value; which makes it the more remarkable that St. Paul should, even then, have supported himself by his own labour, and the seasonable assistance of his Philippian friends, 2 Cor. xi. 8, 9; Phil. iv. 16; 2 Thess. iii. 8, 9. This appears to have been also a sabbatical year, which was then frequently a time of scarcity among the Jews, who no longer enjoyed the providential interposition once vouchsafed at such seasons; at least,

this is the opinion of Greswell, who considers the collection for the poor saints at Jerusalem, Rom. xv. 26, to have occurred at the next return of this season. Our Lord foretold famines in Judæa, Matt. xxiv. 9.

Another prophecy of Christ, that wars and rumours of wars should be heard of, before the end should come, was also strikingly fulfilled about this time. The expulsion of the Jews from Rome gave rise to many disturbances among that factious people, now fast ripening for revolt and ruin; war seemed ready to break out, though it was for a short period quelled.

Such is the light which the study of chronology and history throws upon the records of inspiration; nor should it be despised by those whose leisure and powers of reasoning expose them to the suggestions of infidels and the pride of human wisdom. All knowledge should tend to the Father of lights, from whom it originally comes: as

“Rivers to the ocean run, nor stay in all their course.”

From such research it has been thought probable that the Epistle to the Galatians, chap. iv. 10, was written to dissuade them from observing the sabbatic year, with other Jewish ceremonies; and that to the Ephesians was most likely written not later than A.D. 64, or there would have been some allusion to a destructive earthquake which occurred shortly afterwards in the vicinity of their city.



CHAPTER VI.

EPHESUS — PHILIPPI — TROAS — VARIED LABOURS OF
PAUL — JOURNEY TO JERUSALEM — AGABUS.

FROM Corinth, Paul sailed to Syria; and we find him at Ephesus, where at first he stayed only a short time, but returned and sojourned for two years, having been to Jerusalem, though no details are given as to this journey. He strengthened the disciples. In those days, preachers were few, and their visits far between. The visit of an apostle then would indeed be cheering; and his converts would be ready to say—

Forgotten be each worldly theme
When Christians see each other thus :
We only wish to speak of Him
Who lived, and died, and reigns for us.

From Ephesus he wrote his first Epistle to the Corinthians, Acts xix. 22, in a manner which shows his regard for them, and his faithfulness in reproving sin; endeavouring to correct the disorders which were prevalent among them. These were, 1. Schisms and divisions, 1 Cor. i. 10—31; iii. 34. 2. Impurity and licentiousness, ch. v., vi. 9—20. 3. Covetousness and strife, ch. vi. 1—8. 4. Associating with heathens, in their idol feasts, ch. viii., ix., x. 5. Disorder in their public worship, ch. xi. 6. Doubts as to the resurrection. Similar errors may be found even now, among Christian professors: all may learn much from the beautiful description of love or charity given in ch. xiii. Those border most on the heavenly state whose hearts are fullest of this Divine principle. It is the surest offspring of God, and bears his fairest impression: for “God is love,” 1 John. iv. 8, 16.

Scarcely can it be supposed that the disciples whom Paul found at Ephesus were totally ignorant of the existence of the Holy Spirit, since they had received the

baptism of John, Matt. iii. 11; but rather that they were ignorant of the peculiar gifts, graces, and comforts, which were the effects of his influences. They knew that these had been withdrawn from Israel; and had not heard of their renewal. The words imply, “whether the Holy Ghost be yet given;” they are so rendered in John vii. 39. These influences and gifts were then imparted to the Ephesians; and during the three years which Paul laboured among them, his efforts were attended with signal success. The numerous miracles wrought by his hands drew the attention even of his enemies: a spurious imitation followed, on the part of some vagrant Jews, the sons of Sceva, who endeavoured to expel an evil spirit by pronouncing an adjuration in the name of Jesus whom Paul preached; but were immediately assaulted and overcome. When those who are destitute of saving faith undertake to write or preach concerning Jesus, it will seldom prove to purpose; and, unless the grace of God interpose, their latter end is worse than their beginning. This remark will apply to any partial or pretended acknowledgment of the gospel, while its whole scope and design are overlooked: compare Matt. vii. 21—27.

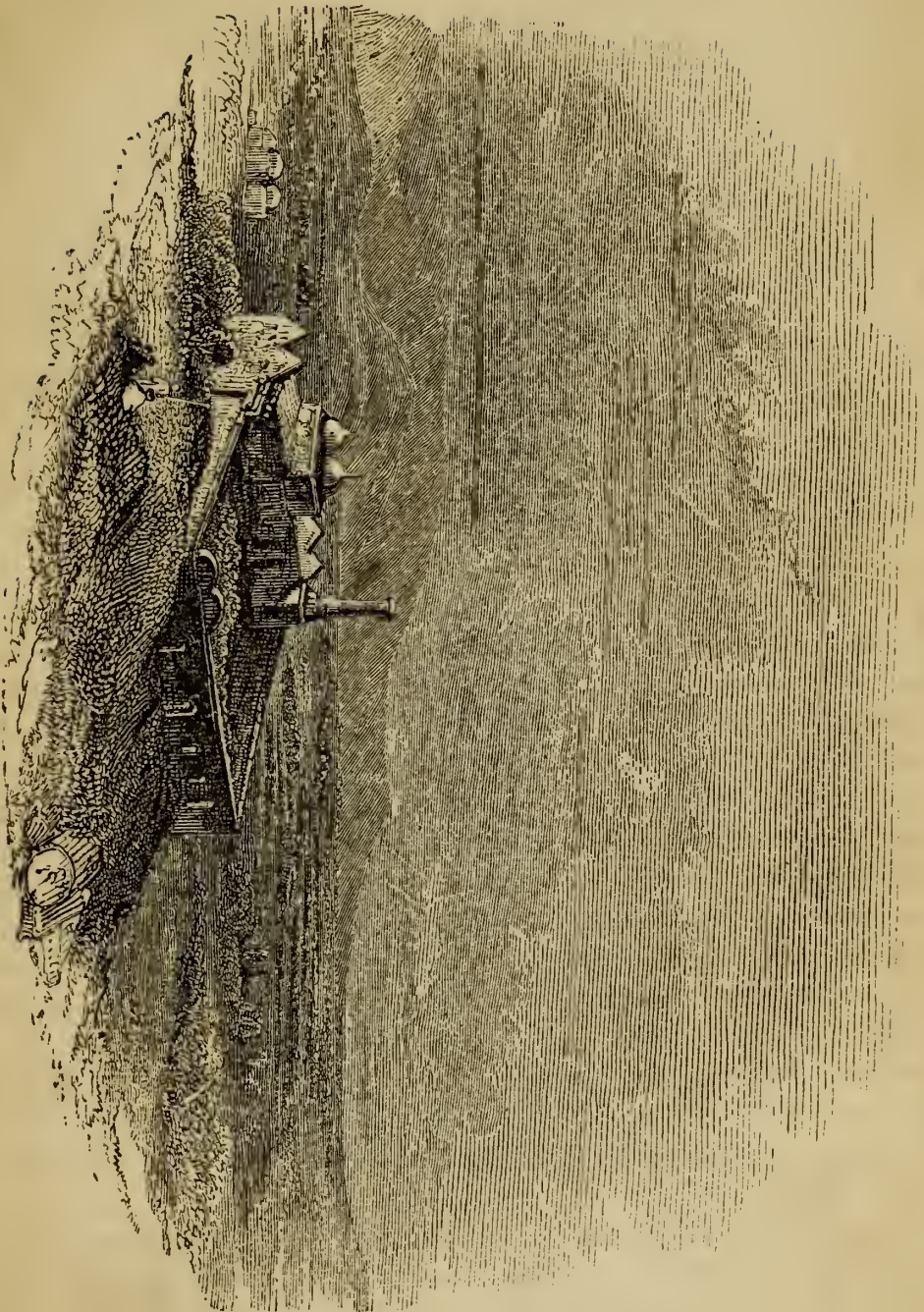
Many of the Ephesians gave a striking proof of the reality of their faith. This city had long been remarkable for the practice of magic and other unlawful arts; but these were so directly contrary to the gospel, that those who had been awakened renounced their delusions, and publicly burned the books which contained the secrets of their skill; which were so highly esteemed as to be valued at 50,000 pieces of silver—a sum that could not have been less than £1500 of our money, while some consider that it was equal to £7000. The Roman laws had ordered that magical works should be destroyed; but probably the possessors did not produce them of their own accord. Neither is it expressly stated that all were works of this kind: many other species of learning are repugnant to Scripture truth. Amidst the cold and heart-petrifying studies of philosophy or science, says Blunt, the simple truths of the gospel often become distasteful. Amidst the excitements of romance, or the charms of meretricious

poetry, the joys and sorrows of religion lose their due value and weight. The real Christian will seek to imitate the pious Henry Martyn, who would never allow himself to peruse a book after he felt it gaining a preference to his Bible. Like the gold and jewels of Egypt, the attainments of human learning, according as they are used, may either become ornaments for the sanctuary, which may be used for the glory of God, or idols productive of hurt to the soul, and doomed to destruction, *Exod. xxxii., xxxv.*

“So mightily grew the word of God, and prevailed” at Ephesus, where a valuable Christian church long after remained, that the opposition of its enemies was aroused in a remarkable manner. The silver shrines made by Demetrius were little models of the celebrated temple of Diana, in that city, which was one of the seven wonders of the ancient world; and though destroyed about three hundred and fifty years B. C., had fully regained its former splendour. It is thus described:—

“In the proud land of palaces wert thou,
 Alone and matchless, as thine own fair queen
 Shines 'midst the gems of night's star-crowned brow,
 Veiling their dim rays with superior sheen:
 Thy countless columns gleamed in rich array:
 The gifts of monarchs, and the work of men
 Whose nobler names, when regal thrones decay,
 Shall boast the meed of fame's recording pen.”

Let it be remembered that the Romish idolatry of the virgin Mary, in many respects, resembled the heathen notions of Diana; and both were borrowed from the old Phœnician worship of Ashtaroth, or the moon, called the queen of heaven, *Jer. vii. 18.* In popish countries, little representations of the image at Loretto, etc., are in as great request as the shrines of Diana were formerly at Ephesus: and this was once the case in England. Has the evil been entirely renounced? Are not many Christians now more anxious to encourage the fine arts, than to promote the spiritual worship which God requires? The idea of “the image which fell down from Jupiter” was also entertained in many cases, as the Palladium of Troy, and in some famous ancient statues, though these



articles worshipped as sent down from heaven are considered usually to have been acroolites, or some of those masses which are occasionally seen to fall from the clouds, or rather from the region of the air, the origin of which has set at naught the researches of philosophers.

A full account of the uproar which arose at Ephesus is given, Acts xix. 25—40. Seldom has a greater tumult been excited against two inoffensive ministers of the gospel: the clamour, superstition, and ignorance of the mob, are graphically portrayed. St. Paul refers to it in 1 Cor. xv. 32. It does not appear that he was literally exposed to wild beasts, but the fury of the populace resembled that of wild animals, and was no less dangerous; while such a conflict in the theatre seems literally to have been intended for Gaius and Aristarchus, the beloved fellow-labourers of the apostle—who himself did not shrink from danger, but was dissuaded by the earnest solicitations of his friends, and of others who respected him, the Asiarchs, or presidents in the games, etc. Alexander seems to have been a Jew, an enemy to Paul, but also opposed to image worship. He may have been the “coppersmith” who is mentioned in 2 Tim. iv. 14. The riot lasted for two hours, and was a notorious breach of the peace, and without even a plausible pretext—Paul and his associates having offered no violence to the temple or image of Diana. These arguments were used by the town clerk, though a heathen, in stilling the violence of the people. The servants of God need seldom be fearful of the interference of magistrates, Rom. xiii. 3, 4, unless in cases of direct persecution: but their adversaries will often stoop to turn from the magistrates to the mob. St. Paul, in the midst of these dangers, was preserved unhurt; and God can still raise up friends for his people, even amongst his enemies.

The city of Ephesus has been long since destroyed: all that now remains is a miserable village surrounded by ruins, and called, by the Turks, Aiasaluk—a corruption of Agios Thelogus, from its vicinity to the church of St. John the divine; but the site of that building is covered by a dilapidated Mohammedan mosque. The pillars of

granite which sustained the roof are said to have adorned the temple of Diana. Other fragments of columns, statues, enormous stones, and blocks of marble, lie scattered upon the neighbouring plain. The site of the ancient theatre, Acts xix. 31, may also be traced. Not only did St. Paul visit this ancient city, but it seems also to have been under the pastoral care of his beloved disciple Timothy, 1 Tim. i. 4, and it shared the affectionate concern of St. John, Rev. ii. 1. But, to adopt the words of an eminent writer, "Some centuries passed, and the temples of Jesus were thrown down to make way for the delusions of Mohammed; the cross is removed from the dome of the church, and the crescent glitters in its stead. A pestilential morass, covered with mud and rushes, has succeeded to the waters that brought up the ships laden with merchandise from every country. To such an extent is the malaria increased, that Ephesus is hardly to be approached with safety for six months of the year."

Taking leave of the disciples at Ephesus, to whom he wrote an affectionate letter, some years afterwards, Paul departed for Macedonia. The particulars of this visit are not told. From Philippi he wrote his second Epistle to the Corinthians, expressing his satisfaction at the manner in which they had evinced repentance for their past errors, sorrowing after a godly sort. "Yea," he says, "what carefulness it wrought in you, what clearing of yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what vehement desire, what zeal, what revenge." He received news of this reformation from Titus, 2 Cor. vii. 6, and it was a comfort to him under deep outward afflictions and inward conflicts, ch. i. 8: such was his warm interest for the spiritual prosperity of others. Here is an instance of the brevity of the apostolic narrative; these sufferings are not mentioned in the book of Acts, as others had been already detailed, but Paul found it expedient to mention them to the people of Corinth, where false apostles had underrated his character and services. He alludes to other trials, ch. xi. 21—33, and contrasts his actions with those of vainglorious boasters. All the circumstances thus enumerated must have occurred before the yet more pressing dangers

detailed in Acts xxi.—xxviii. At the same time, a coincidence between the Acts and the Epistles must be noticed: the same names are mentioned in Acts xx. 4, and Rom. xvi. 21—23. The Epistle to the Romans was written at this time. Tertius, there mentioned, is supposed to be the same with Silas; both names, when translated, having one signification. In this treatise, Paul speaks much of the differences which then existed between Jewish and Gentile converts, and of the way of salvation as open to both.

Another circumstance should also be stated: the “collection for the saints,” so often mentioned in the early epistles of Paul, must have been the alms and offerings alluded to in Acts xxiv. 18. It would be very interesting to know in what state Paul found the church at Corinth when he arrived there; but the shortness of the inspired record is one cause which renders it accessible to the world. Far better is it that the bread of life should be generally diffused, than that the manner in which it was received at a distance, by others, should in every instance be related. Let us apply the facts that are given for instruction to ourselves.

Paul and his companions separated, but they assembled again at Troas. There they had an interesting meeting, probably in some private dwelling. Jowett, in his “Christian Researches,” thus describes a house not far distant, where he lodged in 1818: “We find the first floor entirely used as a store; it is filled with large barrels of oil, the produce of this rich country: the second floor consisting of a humble suite of rooms, occupied by the family for daily use. On the next story all their expense is lavished. The room is both higher and larger than those below, and the projecting windows considerably overhang the street. In such an upper room, secluded, spacious, and commodious, St. Paul was invited to preach his parting discourse. The divan, or raised seat, with mats or cushions, encircles the interior of each projecting window: and when company is numerous, they sometimes place large cushions behind the company seated on the divan, so that a second tier are sitting behind, higher than the front row. Eutychus, thus sitting, would be on a level with the open window:

and overcome with sleep, would easily fall out, from the third loft of the house, into the street, and be almost certain to lose his life. Thither St. Paul went down, and comforted the alarmed company, by bringing up Eutychus alive. There were many lights in the upper chamber. The very great plenty of oil in this neighbourhood would enable them to afford many lamps: the heat of these, and so much company, would cause the drowsiness of Eutychus



at that late hour, and be the occasion likewise of the windows being open." Here is also a refutation of the slanders of some ancient writers, who declared that the Christians used to hold their assemblies in the dark, for the purpose of indulging in vice and crime.

It was not usual with the Christians to render their meetings so unseasonably long as would interfere with other duties; but this being probably the only time the Christians should ever enjoy the company of the apostle, was a reason for continuing together all night, even till

break of day. It seems that none except Eutychus slept : perhaps he strove to keep awake ; and the fact that he was raised to life prevented any just ground of offence to the scoffer. This account, however, teaches us a lesson, that though the spirit is willing, the flesh is weak ; and God will have mercy rather than sacrifice. But what shall be said of those who habitually “sleep under sermons ;” or, by a careless, indolent frame of mind, suffer the words of life to fall powerless on their ear ; or are ready to say, “What a weariness,” respecting the service of the sanctuary, while they can waste hour after hour in the pursuit of pleasure ? Reader, could you sleep if warned that your house was on fire ? or if told of a splendid treasure which was within your reach ? Such infatuation would be quite incredible as to earthly things. How is it, then, that in a case of far greater moment similar infatuation occurs continually, so that no surprise is excited ? Surely, because men are wiser for this world than the next.

Troas, Assos, Mitylene, (or Lesbos,) and Miletus, were all populous places at this period, and still contain many remains of ancient buildings, so that they are used as a sort of quarries for supplying materials for modern erections. Paul travelled from the first of these places on foot, though his companions sailed. This road is described as rough ; and some writers have supposed that Paul chose it for that reason, out of self-denial. This, however, is not stated ; and such conduct was not usual with him, though he kept under his body, lest he should be a castaway. Others think he walked, that he might be alone : but whatever reason might exist, the simple habits of the apostle were clearly shown ; he was poor, “yet making many rich.” As Paley says, “We see him travelling from country to country, enduring every species of hardship, encountering every extremity of danger, assaulted by the populace, punished by the magistrates, scourged, beat, stoned, left for dead ; expecting, wherever he came, a renewal of the same treatment, yet when driven from one city, preaching in the next ; spending his whole time in the employment, sacrificing to it his pleasures, his ease, and his safety : persisting in this course to old age,

unaltered by the experience of perverseness, ingratitude, prejudice, desertion ; unsubdued by anxiety, want, labour, persecutions ; unwearied by long confinement, undismayed by the prospect of death. Such was St. Paul."

The root which produced such fruits is described by Paul himself—the constraining influence of the love of Christ, 2 Cor. v. 14 ; 1 Cor. xi. 1 ; who for our sakes became man, and "went about doing good : " renouncing every other pursuit that He might be about his Father's business ; enduring the cross, despising the shame, humbling himself even to death, that he might make poor sinners the children of God, and exalt them to eternal life. Paul had learned of Christ Jesus, and his conduct evinced the mind that was in him.

"When one that holds communion with the skies
Has filled his urn where those pure waters rise,
And once more mingles with us meaner things,
'Tis even as if an angel shook his wings.
Thus, when a ship is freighted with the stores
The sun matures on India's spicy shores,
'Twere vain inquiry to what port she went,—
The gale informs us, laden with the scent."

These remarks will apply to the interesting discourse that Paul delivered at Miletus, to the elders of the Ephesian church, which Cave calls his address to the clergy, or visitation sermon. It well deserves the attention of all ministers, and of private Christians also. Happy are those shepherds who can say to their flocks, "I kept back nothing that was profitable for you ;" and happy the flock that duly improves such privileges. The whole passage should be attentively perused. The parting was most affecting : the original, chap. xxi. 1, reads, "When we had torn ourselves from them." Other "meetings and partings" are recorded in the verses that follow. It is pleasing to see that there was a church then at Tyre, that heathen city which Jesus spoke of as less guilty than those in Judæa who rejected his preaching : and this city retained the profession of true religion, when others around it abandoned themselves to Mohammedanism. Whole families there, in the days of St. Paul, were Christians : these

were “found out” by the travellers. The same Greek word is used in Luke ii. 16. Husbands, wives, and children joined in commending the apostle in prayer to their



common Lord. The gospel is not confined to one class, it includes all human beings, without distinction of sex or age. Historians speak of women at their distaffs, who conversed on spiritual subjects, and boys and girls who were well informed as to religious knowledge. Thus early were females and children admitted to share the joys and sorrows of their Christian friends.

The early Christians had plans for teaching the young, whom they called catechumens. Instruction was chiefly given by parents and private friends; but the Saviour himself had encouraged children to praise his name: and the religion of believers in the present day differs not in essential points from that of Isaiah and other men of God. From them the poet thus writes:—

As truly as I live,
His holy lips have said,
My glory in due time shall fill
The earth that I have made.

Thy children I will teach,
And great shall be their peace;
My Spirit I'll pour out afresh,
And knowledge shall increase.

The gospel soon made its way into the apartments of heathen females: in what way we are not expressly told; but, from the customs which then prevailed, it is probable that they were first instructed by teachers of their own sex. In some cases, the deaconesses or servants of the church, Rom. xvi., were admitted; in others, the teachers might have been slaves, like the little captive maid, 2 Kings v.: for then every Christian acknowledged the duty of making known the way of salvation through Christ, when opportunities offered. Celsus, a heathen, who wrote about A. D. 176, ridicules the slaves who could discourse of the most wonderful matters, when "alone with their master's children, or with women who were not much wiser." An ancient gem, which still exists, represents two females, one sitting, the other standing, and both listening with earnest attention to an ass, clothed in the Roman toga or gown, and standing erect before them. Under this figure, the scoffers of the day represented the blessed Jesus, whom they called the ass-hoofed God of the Christians. Other quotations from early writers show the opposition which women who received the gospel had often to endure from unconverted relations, their temptations to habits of luxury and extravagance, and the trials to which they were exposed in domestic life, among the heathens whom Paul justly describes, Rom. i. 31, as "without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful."

Some of Paul's Christian friends possessed the gift of prophecy; and these forewarned him of the dangers that awaited him at Jerusalem. Not that the Holy Spirit, which influenced Paul here, spake contradictorily; but it was the will of God that Paul should proceed, though aware, in this instance, of what is mercifully hid from men in general, the cares and sorrows of the morrow. The Tyrian disciples received their knowledge from Heaven; it is not said that the *advice* they gave was from Heaven also. Similar scenes occurred elsewhere: as, for instance, at Cæsarea; and hither St. Paul was afterwards brought as a prisoner, ch. xxiii. Here, in the house of Philip the evangelist, a married preacher of the gospel, (the Romish doctrine, forbidding to marry, was there unknown,) sur-

rounded by his pious daughters and other believers, the well-known and highly gifted Agabus, binding his own hands and feet with Paul's girdle, foretold the treatment he should receive from the Jews at Jerusalem. All present were urgent in persuading him to alter his intentions, as the disciples of Jesus had done on former occasions. Our Lord, however, firmly withstood their solicitations; and Paul acted in like manner, though his language showed his deep and earnest feelings: "What mean ye to weep and to break mine heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus," Acts xxi. 13.

"Jesus! that name, pronounced in faith,
Is full of wonder-working power;
It conquers Satan, sin, and death,
And cheers in trouble's darkest hour."

The Lord had showed Paul what things he should suffer for his name's sake, in answer to his inquiry, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" All Christians are not called to do great things, but, in this world of sin and sorrow, all are required in some way or other to suffer; and perhaps, to minds constituted like Paul, a lengthened period of bonds and afflictions would be a severer test of real principle, than a painful and speedy death by martyrdom. Yet he was resigned to endure with cheerfulness whatever discipline his heavenly Father should have prepared for him.

Only a brief epitome of his journeys has here been given. The reader should seek to be familiar with the account given in Scripture. It has been truly said, that "in the Acts of the Apostles a striking provision has been made for pleasure, as well as benefit. Nothing but clearness and accuracy appears to be aimed at, yet everything which can give interest to such a work is attained. Neither Xenophon nor Cæsar could stand a comparison with it. St. Luke has seen everything so clearly, has understood it so fully, and expressed it so appositely, as to need only a simple rendering of his own exact words, in order to his having, in every language, the air of an original."

CHAPTER VII.

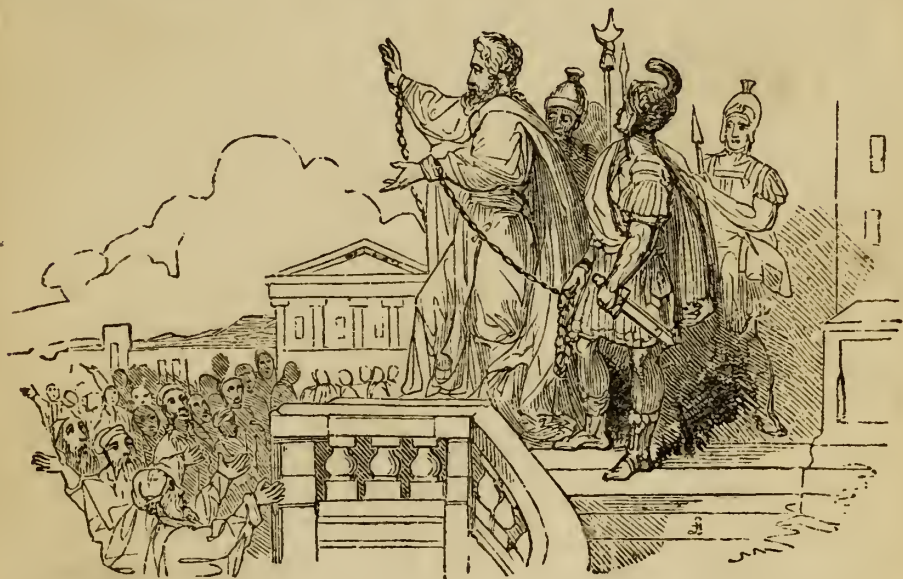
EVENTS AT JERUSALEM—PAUL IS MADE A PRISONER,
EXAMINED, AND SENT TO CÆSAREA.

THE first Christians did not come forward, on public occasions, with empty words and professions, but with the deep, full, silent tide of mighty works. Such formed the subject of Paul's discourse with the Jewish Christians, which probably resembled the theme of his Epistle to the Romans; that is, the leading truths of the gospel, alike offered to Jews and Gentiles. What shall be said of the step which Paul next took, by the advice of James and others, observing the usual ceremonies of a Nazarite's vow, to show that he walked orderly and kept the law given to the Jews? This is not expressly commended or censured in Scripture; but since the apostles nowhere arrogated to themselves any pretensions to infallibility, it cannot be unfair to state, that considering what is elsewhere said of the vanity of mere outward forms, "those who suppose that in this instance he was over-persuaded to deviate from the open conduct he generally maintained, have some ground for their suspicion. This, however, is certain, that his temporizing did not answer the proposed end; but instead of rendering him more acceptable, involved him in the greatest danger." These are the words of John Newton; and this opinion may be applied to the circumstances of Christians at different times, when surrounded by those who are conformed to this world. It does not appear that Paul brought foreigners into the temple, though having been rejected by the Jews, and driven from their synagogues, he was not ashamed of being seen with Gentiles elsewhere: why, then, should he observe the Jewish ceremonial law, that wall of partition which the death of Christ had removed?

There were at this time three classes of Jews at Jerusalem: those who, walking in the liberty of the gospel, believed that the observance of the Mosaic rites were no longer necessary to salvation; those who were enlightened by the gospel, but still had not laid aside the prejudices of their education and nation; and, lastly, those who were bigoted and hardened against the truth. It will be readily understood, that the advice Paul received and followed proceeded from the first of these, and was in conformity to the views of the second; but it was the third set who, enraged against Paul, stirred up by some of his old opponents "of Asia," furiously assaulted him in the temple, rejoicing to find him in their power. Thus, to use the words of John Knox, "he was brought into the most desperate danger that ever he sustained, God designing to show thereby, that we must not do evil that good may come." News of this uproar soon reached the Roman commander in the castle, or tower of Antonia, which was built near the temple, for the purpose of quelling seditious disturbances. The speedy appearance of soldiers and centurions, headed by Claudius Lysias, the chief captain of the band, or tribune of the cohort, put a stop to the tumult: Paul was seized by the Jews, but secured by the Roman soldiers. His course of earthly liberty and comfort were thus suddenly closed: surely those who had given the trimming advice with which he complied must have deeply regretted the result; but God could and did overrule it for good.

Paul did not lose his presence of mind; he knew that when brought before his enemies, it was for a testimony against them, Matt. x. 18; and he requested permission to address the people. The chief captain had taken him for an Egyptian, who had lately put himself at the head of a factious rabble; but when he began to speak in the much-loved Hebrew language, the attention of the multitude was arrested: he was not interrupted while giving a true and faithful account of his conversion—alluding particularly to his early training, like their own, and his intercourse with their high priest and elders. There was much in the history of Paul that resembled that of Martin

Luther: like him, he was once an ardent and sincere professor of the errors which he afterwards learned to renounce; like him, he was the object of hatred and contempt, and had to stand alone against hosts of enemies, that were supported by human authority. But both could, like the prophet Elisha, look up to heaven, and say, "They that be with us are more than they that be with them," 2 Kings vi. 16.



The account he gave of a vision in which he had seen the Lord Jesus, and received a commission to preach to the Gentiles, drew forth a fresh burst of violence, from which the chief captain forcibly removed him.

Rev. T. H. Horne has collected a number of statements which give a favourable idea of the nature of the Roman judicature. "There were indeed instances of shameless bribery and corruption; but there were far more cases of fair and honourable trial, without which the law of the Twelve Tables forbade that any should be condemned. This will be repeatedly seen in the sequel of the history of Paul. Those magistrates who were found to have broken the laws might be degraded from their office—which the judges at Philippi had dreaded, when they heard that Paul was entitled to the privileges of a Roman citizen, probably not on account of his birth at Tarsus,

where we do not read that a colony was established, but perhaps from some family connexion. The same dignity now rescued him from the ignominy of scourging: this was deemed a most dishonourable insult, as appears from several passages in the classics. Cicero, in his oration against the guilty and unjust Verres, mentions, as one of his greatest crimes, that a Roman citizen was publicly beaten with rods, in the harbour at Messina; and no other expression of the unhappy wretch was heard, amid the cruelties he suffered, and the sound of the strokes that were inflicted, but this, 'I am a Roman citizen.' By this declaration, he fondly imagined that he should put an end to the cruel usage to which he was subjected. 'Are things at last come to this wretched state, that a Roman citizen, in a Roman province, in this most public and open manner, should be beaten with rods?' 'Other authors might be cited; but let it be remembered that the blessed Saviour endured this indignity, Isa. l. 6; 'liii. 5; John xix. 1.

The chief captain found that Paul was, in one respect, his superior, being a citizen of Rome by birth, while he had paid a large sum to purchase the same privilege. After this he treated Paul with respect and consideration. On the morrow, the Jewish sanhedrim assembled;—though they traced their existence as a council from the seventy elders which Moses appointed, Numb. xi. 14—16, they were men of the most opposite spirit; and gazed upon the apostle, with angry looks, like so many fierce beasts of prey: while he meekly declared that he had always acted in conformity to the dictates of his conscience before God. What a blessing it is to have a mind at rest, when all around is alarm and confusion! 1 John iii. 19—21. Even the heathen Seneca compared the mind of a wise and good man to the state of the upper region above the clouds, which is always serene and calm. A writer in later times has used the same emblem:—

As some tall cliff that lifts its awful form
 Swells from the vale, and midway leaves the storm,
 Though round its breast the rolling clouds are spread,
 Eternal sunshine settles on its head.

Paul had not accused others, by asserting his own uprightness : but the high priest was quick to take offence, which is too often the case with those who dispute about religion. He ordered some to strike Paul, though he was not condemned : here the conduct of the Romans might have put a Jew to shame. Paul reproved him, saying, "God shall smite thee, thou whited wall;" a sentence which was soon after verified by the sudden death of Ananias. Yet it is possible that this awful truth might have been stated with some sharpness, for which Paul soon apologized, with these words, expressive of a truly humble and right spirit : "I wist not, brethren, that he was the high priest; for it is written, Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people." In truth, Ananias had been degraded from his office, as high priest; though, since no other had been appointed, he continued to preside as such, in the meetings of the sanhedrim.

Knowing the errors of the Sadducees, who were present, and denied the existence of spiritual beings and a future state, Paul at once adverted to that subject. This engaged on his behalf the party feelings of the Pharisees, who were the more powerful sect, and remembered the advice of Gamaliel, Acts v. 38 : a warm dispute arose between these two parties, during which the chief captain sent to remove Paul, and the assembly dispersed. Thus God is pleased to make use of one sinner to overthrow the wicked devices of another.

How sweetly must the apostle have felt his spirit refreshed, after this day of excitement, bustle, and contention, when at night the Lord stood by him, and said, "Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast testified of me at Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome." No comment is needed here. Jesus will never forsake his people; and while he is with them, they need fear no evil, even in the valley of the shadow of death.

Impatient of delay, the Jews planned to destroy their victim before they would take any food. They held that it was lawful for a private person to kill those who led others astray from the law of Moses : and their rash vows

of not eating or drinking could easily be loosed by any of their rabbins. Providentially, the purpose was detected, and made known to Paul by his nephew, a youth whom he sent to Lysias, that he might be enabled to prevent their design: here again humane and prudent heathens were more just and kind than the professed people of God. How pleased the youth would be, to find himself the means of saving Paul from death: an encouragement, and a lesson, to young men, as Hawker represents it. God had work for Paul to do elsewhere, and it was his duty to use proper means for preserving his life.

The letter which Lysias wrote to the Roman governor, at Cæsarea, when sending Paul thither, is a good example



RUINS OF CÆSAREA.

of the Roman style of correspondence: it is clear, concise, and faithful; and in it he addressed the highest magistrate in the land. His arrangements also were considerate

he sent Paul at once, the very next night, and furnished him with a horse, as he probably could not have kept pace with the marching soldiers, and expedition was needful. All this was ordered by the providence of God, that Paul should have the semblance, at least, of fair and open trial, in the court of the Roman deputy Felix.

Perhaps there was not much real justice under this governor, though he was highly praised by Tertullus, an orator retained by the accusers of Paul, when they followed him to Cæsarea. Tacitus, a Latin historian, describes Felix as a man void of all justice and humanity. Under his government, the people were subjected to innumerable vexations and injuries, and their property and lives were wantonly sacrificed, to gratify his avarice and revenge. He procured the assassination of Jonathan the high priest, because he opposed his tyrannical proceedings. Depending on the influence of his brother Pallas, who was high in favour with the emperor, he exercised royal authority with the spirit of a slave, and indulged every species of cruelty and lust. How different will the characters of Paul and Felix appear at the day of judgment, from what they were represented in the harangue of Tertullus ! Nay, how differently were they, even then, in the esteem of those who were not deluded by self-interest or bigotry. Let not Christians value the applause, or be troubled at the revilings of ungodly men, who have represented the vilest of the human race almost as gods, and the excellent of the earth as pestilent, and movers of sedition.

The old charge against the people of God, that they were the troublers of the land, is here applied to Paul; and this is the only instance in Scripture in which Christians are called Nazarenes, though, in those days, it was a common term of reproach used by their enemies. It was derived from the town of Nazareth, Matt. ii. 23; but, as Hawker says, the word comes from Netzar, meaning separate: and the Lord Jesus is, by way of eminence, so distinguished in heaven and earth; by his apostles, John i. 45; by angels, Mark xvi. 6; by his enemies, John xviii. 5; xix. 19; Matt. xxvi. 71; by his followers, Acts

iii. 6; iv. 10; by devils, Mark i. 24; and by himself, Acts xxii. 8.

Paul again alluded to his own conduct and exercise, "to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men." The expression denotes the study of a person who is anxious to excel in any art: his acquaintance, reflections, and recreations, are all accommodated to his main purpose; and though sometimes at rest, his mind is never idle. Thus Paul was able to disprove the first two charges alleged against him of sedition and profaning the temple: as to the third, or heresy, he boldly came forward, and acknowledged that he was guilty, if it were a crime to love the Lord who died for him, with all his heart, and mind, and strength, "believing all things written in the law and in the prophets." Happy are those who are enabled to evince the same spirit.

Felix was not wholly a stranger to Christianity; there were many believers in Cæsarea; and he allowed Paul a limited degree of intercourse with them, while he deferred a present examination of his case. He had heard that Paul was charged with gifts and offerings for his countrymen; and perhaps thought that he would be induced to employ some of this money for his own release. But this hope was vain: also no doubt the Christians would deem it wrong to countenance bribery or extortion, even if there was no prospect that Felix would do justice for its own sake. They would not do evil that good might come.

One interview between the governor and his prisoner is particularly mentioned. On this occasion, Paul evinced the same spirit which had influenced John the Baptist in dealing with Herod: he reasoned concerning "righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come;" while his judge sat for some time in silence, but at length was seen to tremble at his message, and promised further attention on some future day. Felix was accompanied by Drusilla, the daughter of that Herod who is named in Acts xii., and who had left her own husband, that she might live with him, and avoid the jealousies of her own family, who taunted her for her personal beauty. This licentious woman was a Jewess, and she seems not to have been

affected by the preaching of Paul: perhaps wrapped up in self-sufficiency, she thought herself a daughter of Abraham, though her crimes were so glaring. And the heathen Felix, though touched for a moment, soon yielded to unbelief and worldliness—like the ice which is thawed by the sunbeam, and quickly freezes again: his trembling did not lead him, like the jailer at Philippi, to open his mind to Paul the prisoner, and ask of him, “What must I do to be saved?” Acts xvi. 30.

Thus fading are the impressions of natural men. “Hell is paved with good resolutions,” as an old divine has impressively stated. How many have had seasons of awakening in childhood, under the instructions of pious parents or faithful teachers. How many, in later life, have heard the gospel preached, and at the time felt concern for their souls—yet these never realized their own state, so as to seek for mercy in the appointed way. They never tasted the sweetness and excellence of Christ and his salvation; they never laid hold upon the promises of God. Their goodness was as the morning cloud, which appears for a moment and vanishes away.

The wandering star and fleeting wind
Are emblems of the fickle mind:
The morning cloud and early dew
Bring our inconstancy to view.

But cloud, and wind, and dew, and star,
Only a faint resemblance bear;
Nor can there aught in nature be
So changeable and frail as we.

Our outward walk and inward frame
Are scarcely through an hour the same;
We vow, and straight our vows forget,
And then those very vows repeat.

We sin forsake, to sin return;
Are hot, then cold; now freeze, now burn:
Now sink to hell, in dark despair,
Then soar to heaven, and triumph there.

With flowing tears, Lord, we confess
Our folly and unsteadfastness:
When shall these hearts more stable be,
Fixed by thy grace alone on thee?

CHAPTER VIII.

PAUL BEFORE FESTUS AND AGRIPPA—HIS VOYAGE
TO ROME—RECEPTION THERE.

FOR two whole years Paul remained a prisoner under Felix: how awful the account which this unjust judge must give, for thus preventing the invaluable public efforts of the apostle! But let us pause, lest, while judging him, we condemn ourselves also. Felix, being recalled to Rome, left Paul in confinement, to please the Jews; and his successor Porcius Festus, also a heathen, though probably more respectable than Felix in his private conduct, was quickly urged to proceed against Paul in such a manner as should place him within reach of their malice. Festus would not condemn the apostle unheard: and the latter, by an appeal to the Roman emperor, as supreme magistrate, put himself in the way to proceed to Rome, and thus freed himself from the constant apprehension in which he must have lived, while remaining in Judæa. In all this, there was nothing contrary to the path of duty, which is the true way of safety.

But Paul was once more to plead the cause of Christ in public, not only before Festus, who spoke of the blessed Jesus merely as a deceased mortal, "whom Paul affirmed to be alive;" but also before those who were conversant with the Old Testament Scriptures—Agrippa, the youthful representative of the Herod family, and Bernice, his widowed sister, who is accused of sinful conduct in connexion with her brother. These paid Festus a complimentary visit shortly after his accession; they came with much pomp, or "phantasia," as it is truly called—a mere phantasy or show: "the fashion of this world passeth away."

The speech which Paul made to them, Acts xxvi., is well deserving attention, from the grace of its manner, as well as the excellence of its matter. He had alluded to his

own conversion; and was proceeding to speak of the effects which the gospel had on the Gentiles, (he could have told how the Thessalonians forsook their idols, how the Corinthians were reclaimed from vice, and how the word of God had prevailed at Ephesus, and elsewhere,) when he was roughly stopped by Festus, with a charge of madness; for the Romans no doubt thought this religious discussion tedious and unnecessary, and longed to bring it to a close. Many would be ready to treat Paul in a similar way, if he were living now. "The 'good man' of our polite literature," says a judicious writer, "never talks with affectionate devotion of Christ, as the great High Priest of his profession, as the exalted Friend, whose injunctions are the laws of his virtues, whose work and sacrifice are the basis of his hopes, whose doctrines guide and awe his reasonings, and whose example is the pattern which he is earnestly aspiring to resemble. On the supposition of his having fallen into the company of St. Paul, you can easily imagine the total want of congeniality!"

There was one present who was well acquainted with the letter of the word of God, and had acquired some knowledge as to its fulfilment. And to him Paul now appealed. What did Agrippa reply? "*Almost* thou persuadest me to be a Christian." But why not quite?

"What! but almost convinced,—and rest you there?
 Sad proof, O king, your soul is not your care!
 Not so the famished wretch, on seeing bread,
 Would say, 'Enough!—I could almost be fed!'
 Nor would the sick to his physician say,
 I could almost be cured, go now thy way!
 Ah, fool! ere long you'll know, to awful cost,
 That to be *almost* saved, is wholly to be lost."

In the answer Paul made, he showed at once the confidence he had in his cause, the happy frame of his mind, his pleasing address, and unbounded benevolence. He could wish nothing better than what he felt, to his dearest friends; and he wished nothing worse to his greatest enemies. Yet it is painful to reflect, that his efforts then were seemingly fruitless: both Agrippa and Festus appear to have died impenitent. Such humbling lessons are

needful sometimes, to every Christian ; and thus he learns that the work is of God, where it is effectual.

Agrippa and Festus agreed that Paul might have been released, if he had not appealed to Cæsar ; but the appeal being once made, the cause was reserved for the cognizance of the superior court. Some passages in the Roman history bear upon this point. It was now settled that Paul should be sent to Rome : he was accompanied in his voyage, it seems, by St. Luke, and others of his friends, Aristarchus and Trophimus. The account of his voyage is interesting : it shows the ancient mode of sailing, never going far from land, and always dreading the return of wintry weather ; it also illustrates the truth, that many a ship which sets out with fresh colours and gentle breezes, is liable to suffer severe storms, perhaps never even to enter its desired haven : and this will apply to the voyage of life, as well as to the lesser schemes in which we engage. The courteous conduct of Julius, the Roman centurion who had charge of Paul, is particularly noticed. They stopped at Crete ; and here Paul urged that they should stay, because the fast, (or the day of atonement, about the close of September,) was now over, and the short days and long gloomy nights of winter were generally avoided. The use of the mariner's compass was then unknown, the stars were the chief means used for guidance.

The "fair haven of Crete" did not justify its name ; it proved incommodious. The intimations of Paul were disregarded, and an effort was made to reach Phenice, a harbour on the opposite coast ; but the ship was driven out of its course by a tempestuous east wind, called Euroclydon : such are still common in the Mediterranean, and are called Levanters. The occurrences of the voyage are minutely described : they had to part with many of their possessions ; and neither the sunshine, nor the borrowed light of the stars, appeared to show them to which point they should direct their course. Often the Christian, in his progress heavenward, finds his circumstances thus gloomy ; neither outward nor inward comforts are enjoyed by him : but let him then trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God, Isa. i. 10.

During this season, Paul was kept in peace, his mind being stayed on God. Those well-known lines by one who had himself weathered many a storm—beginning,

If Paul in Cæsar's court must stand,
He need not fear the sea :
Secured from harm, on every hand,
By the Divine decree—

are doubtless familiar to many readers. The following lines would equally describe his situation, and may also be used by other pious sailors :—

Above me hangs the silent sky,
Around me rolls the sea ;
The crew is all at rest, and I
Am, Lord, alone with thee.

In winds and waves, and starry sky,
I see thee present here ;
And looking at myself, I say,
Can I be still thy care ?

I think of days and dangers past,
When I have found thee nigh ;
And wonder how thy love can last
To one so vile as I.

Lord, arm my soul with faith in thee,
And fill my heart with love ;
My path from sin and danger free,
And guide me safe above.

And while the waves around me beat,
Lord, often thus descend ;
And grant me here communion sweet
With thee, the sinner's Friend.

No one on board could conjecture in which direction the ship was tossed—but the Lord knew; and an angel was sent from heaven to encourage his servant, though a prisoner, poor and despised of men. Reader, turn to *Psa.* lxxvii. 19; lxxxix. 9, 10; cxli. 3. Thus the supports which Paul enjoyed were made known to his fellow-travellers, and perhaps some of them were usefully impressed. Josephus relates, referring to the date when he was twenty-five years of age: "At the time when Felix was procurator of Judæa, there were certain priests of

my acquaintance, good and worthy persons, whom on a small and trifling occasion he had put into bonds, and sent to Rome to plead their cause before Cæsar. For these I was desirous to procure deliverance; and that especially because I was informed that they were not unmindful of piety towards God, even under their affliction, but supported themselves with figs and nuts. Accordingly I came to Rome, though it was often through great hazards by sea; for our ship being wrecked in the midst of the Adriatic Sea, we that were in it swam for our lives all the night, when, upon the first appearance of the day, a ship of Cyrene appearing to us, by the providence of God, I and some others, eighty in all, preventing the rest, were taken up into the ship: and when I had thus escaped, and came to Puteoli, I became acquainted with Aliturus, an actor of plays, a Jew by birth, and much beloved by Nero, and through his interest became known to Poppæa, Cæsar's wife; and took care as soon as possible to intreat her to procure that the priests might be set at liberty." There is much in this account to render it probable that Josephus was in the same ship with St. Paul; or else there is a striking resemblance: probably he was one of those whose lives were given the apostle, as well as his own. If Paul had thrust himself needlessly into bad company, he might justly have been cast away with them; but being with them in the way of duty, they were preserved with him. God spared them in answer to his prayers. How often has a good man proved a public blessing!

The remainder of this history is soon told. Fourteen days had the voyagers been tossed about, expecting death. They had not even an inclination for their regular food: but now they seemed approaching land, and "wished for day." Paul again encouraged them, and prevented the treacherous shipmen from deserting their posts: the grace of God should animate, not prevent, the performance of human duty. They took some food, and then threw overboard the remaining wheat, to lighten the ship. "All that a man hath will he give for his life." At last the ship was run aground, and completely wrecked;—many vessels perish, with the haven in view!—but not a man was lost; some

could swim, others were saved by means of boards and planks from the broken ship. Even now, storms are



mentioned by those who have sailed near the Adriatic Sea. Truly they that do business in great waters see the works of the Lord, and his mighty wonders in the deep, *Psa. cvii.*

Probably many of the companions of Paul would be awakened to serious thoughts, like those of Jonah, chap. i. 16; or like some Chinese fishermen, who in 1844, when their lives were endangered by a tempest, prayed to the unknown God of the Christians, of whom they had heard—and being delivered from destruction, cast aside their idols, and sought for further instruction. The history of the missions in the South Sea islands also shows the dealings of God with men, both in providence and grace, uniting to accomplish his purposes of mercy. Sometimes the natives have been driven by storms to islands, of which they had no idea, that the gospel might be preached to those among whom the name of Christ was before unknown. In one instance, the converts had been overtaken by fogs and winds, which drove them out of their course, and kept them floating for six weeks, in the pathless ocean, with no prospect but that of being buried

beneath its waves; yet their faith failed not: and when in this situation, as long as they were able, they worked at their oars, and prayed and sang till their voices went away, as they described it, amidst the roaring of the sea. They were afterwards drifted to a heathen land, where they were kindly treated; and half the population, hitherto heathens, received the gospel, and cast away all idolatry; while, for some years, their friends at home supposed them to have been drowned.

Different reasons have been alleged to prove that the island on which Paul was shipwrecked was not Malta, but Meleda, an island not far distant, near to the Illyrian coast; but they are not of sufficient weight to need enumeration in this place. The inhabitants are called "barbarous;" though they were by no means savages. It may be observed, that the opposite coast of Africa is still called Barbary; and the word barbarian was commonly applied, when St. Luke lived, to all nations, except the polished population of Greece and Rome. But those haughty heathens had no cause to despise others: they had themselves recently given a proof of their own barbarity, chap. xxvii. 31, in offering at once to put to death those under their care, without knowing whether they were guilty. The men of Melita were in some degree advanced in civilization: they manifested much kindness to the distressed strangers, and kindled a fire for their use. Here Paul, assisting his companions by gathering sticks, a viper "fastened on his hand," which might have killed him. How often is danger found, where it is least expected!

Safety consists not in escape
From dangers of a frightful shape:
An earthquake may be bid to spare
The man that's strangled by a hair.

But Paul was preserved, according to the promise of the Lord, Mark xvi. 18; Psa. xci. 13; while the wondering Maltese, by turns, pronounced him a murderer and a god. So imperfect is the judgment that is formed from outward events: and thus it was the will of God, that attention should be drawn to the apostle. The name of St. Paul

is given to a bay in the island of Malta, which tradition represents as the scene of these events.

“When I reached the shore of this bay,” says a recent Christian traveller, “I felt I was treading on sacred ground. The waters now were all calm and radiant with the beams of a resplendent sun. But I could imagine the darkness of the heavens, the fury of the storm, the boisterousness of the sea, lashed by fierce winds into unbridled rage, and the sail-rent, dismasted vessel, with its stern already broken by the violence of the waves, so graphically described by St. Luke. As I tried to picture to myself the apostle of the Gentiles standing before that fire kindled on the shore, his apparel dripping with the briny waters of the sea, I thought of his eventful life, and of all he endured for the love of Christ, and the salvation of a dying world. The apostle did not pass three months at Malta, or Melita, in vain. Publius, tradition states, and many of the inhabitants of the island, became converts to Christianity; and it is very certain that Christianity has had a footing in this island ever since the shipwreck of St. Paul. It remains a memorial of the faithfulness of God, and an encouragement to other believers to say—

“Hast thou not given thy word,
To save my soul from death?
And I can trust the Lord
To keep my mortal breath:
I’ll go and come,
Nor fear to die,
Till from on high
Thou call me home.”

Did space permit, a further account might be given, showing how it was by the ancients held uncertain whether this island belonged to Africa or to Europe, and how, by the providence of God, it became subject to England, just in time to promote her maritime concerns, and also to become a missionary station of much importance, from its central position. The principal churches have long been occupied by papists: but one of a different description has been built, in consequence of the liberal donation

of a British queen, who visited Malta in 1838. Here Christian ministers are found; and a college has been founded for the training of the youths of the island whose parents will permit them to receive daily instruction from the word of God, and to join in the prayers offered by Protestant teachers. These lads have formed among themselves a little missionary association. Besides many Bibles and tracts at different times, the *Pilgrim's Progress*, *Keith's Evidence of Prophecy*, and *Barth's Church History* were, in 1842, translated and printed in this island; but the printing here has lately been discontinued, and the papists are ever on the alert to stop the progress of the word of God.

Winter being over, St. Paul left the island of Malta in a vessel which was distinguished by the names of the heathen divinities, *Castor and Pollux*, which were considered as particularly favourable to mariners. The ancients usually had images at the head and stern of their ships; the former was called the sign, the latter was the deity to whose care it was committed: sometimes both were alike, which was probably the case here. The names of *Syracuse*, *Rhegium*, and *Puteoli*, all bring to mind interesting spots, which might be minutely described; but the apostle did not remain in any of these places. How must he have felt when near the termination of his voyage!

“The hand that scooped the waste of waves
Had stilled their angry roar;
And day by day, o’er yawning graves,
Guided his ocean car;
And the same hand would shield him still,
From every snare, from every ill;
Till, led by Bethlehem’s star,
He gained, with an expanded sail,
Where wrecking storms no more prevail.”

Apprized of his approach, many of the Christian Romans went out to meet him, as far as *Appii Forum* and the *Three Taverns*—two towns, the former fifty, and the latter thirty-three miles from the metropolis. Paul thanked God, and took courage when he saw them: even the most eminent believers may be cheered by true Christian inter-

course with those whose attainments are inferior to their own. Paul was led to Rome in chains; but his triumphs were far beyond those with which many whom the world terms great have been greeted on their arrival at this city, 2 Cor. ii. 14.

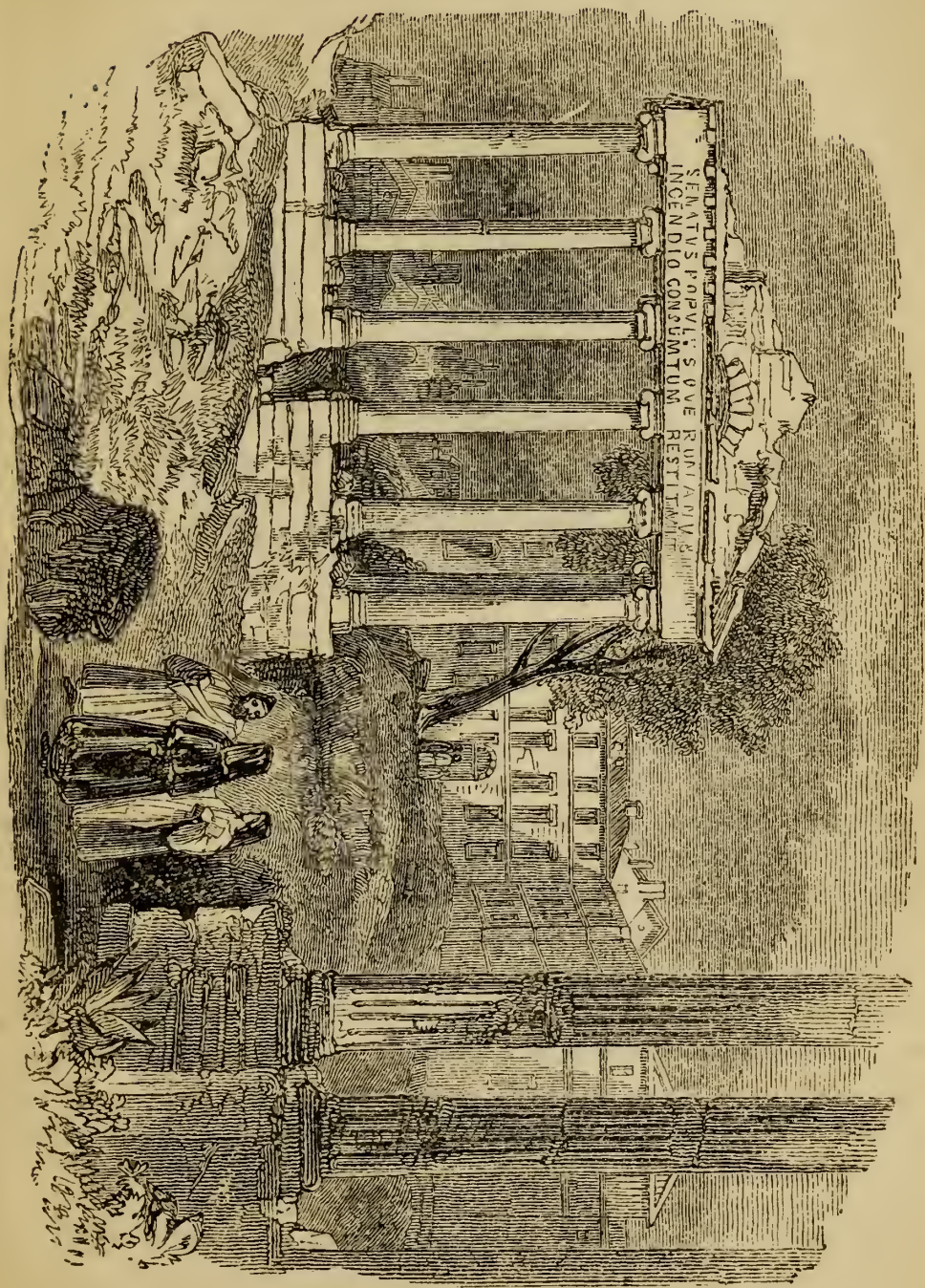
The modern city of Rome does not exactly occupy its ancient site; but the seven hills on which it was built are still discerned by travellers. The Campus Martius, or field of Mars, an open space for public exercises, lying to the north, has now been built over, as well as the rising ground of the Capitoline, Coelian, Viminal, and Quirinal hills; while the Aventine, Esquiline, and Palatine elevations are occupied by gardens and retired dwellings. The last named of these is, perhaps, the most interesting, having been the abode of Romulus, the first founder of Rome, and at that time including the whole of his dominion; but afterwards it was found too small for the single imperial palace, with its ample avenues and recesses, its triple porticoes, with their thousand columns, extending more than a mile in length, and its gardens and pleasure-grounds, which covered the whole plain south of the Forum. Here also stood the largest pile of building in Rome, the magnificent Colosseum, erected by Vespasian, A.D. 80, about six hundred feet in length, and more than seventeen hundred in circumference; of which the central part, called the Arena, is three hundred feet, by one hundred and ninety, and was frequently surrounded by one hundred thousand spectators, ranged in five circular tiers of seats, rising above each other, to witness the scenes of cruelty which were so often enacted here, when wild beasts were brought from the deserts and forests of Asia and Africa, to destroy each other, or to prey upon captives, slaves, and Christian martyrs. These destructive combats were common, when Rome, called the mistress of the world, was in the height of her splendour. The true believers were doubtless few, and insignificant, compared with the rest of its population; though they are honourably named, Rom. xvi.; 2 Tim. i. Here might be enumerated the extensive provinces of the empire; the vast military force required to keep them in subjection; and

then some idea might be formed of the pride which the inhabitants of the metropolis would naturally indulge, and the luxuries which they would delight to heap around them in their elegant private dwellings, as well as in their more celebrated public edifices. The "golden palace" of Nero was standing when Paul visited the city. This was afterwards destroyed; and the Colosseum, the baths of Titus, the Claudian portico, and the temples of peace, filled the same space which Vespasian considered too large for the house of a single mortal. But where temples and palaces once stood, only a few solitary pillars and broken arches now remain; and the site of the Forum, formerly the scene of every renowned public transaction, is deserted, and used as a pasture for cattle. Once it was a spacious market-place, where our ancestors were sold for slaves.

Prisoners, on arriving at Rome, were committed to the care of the prætorian prefect: Afranius Burrhus now held that office, and he seems to have treated Paul with respect. He is commended as a mild and just man, who assisted Nero to gain the imperial throne, but was afterwards put to death by that cruel tyrant. Seneca, another eminent heathen, was the tutor of the emperor, but afterwards was doomed to death by him. It is remarkable that these two distinguished men, Paul and Seneca, were both living at Rome at the same time, and might have been known by character to each other, though they had no personal intercourse. Some writers have inquired whether Seneca was converted to Christianity; but his writings, however moral, are utterly destitute of spiritual life, yet he would have been one of those of whom the poet speaks, as

Men that if now alive would sit content
And humble learners of the Saviour's worth,
Preach it who might. Such was their love of truth,
Their thirst of knowledge, and their candour too.

The time which the apostle Paul spent at Rome was well employed. He was permitted to dwell alone for two years in his hired house: doubtless his preaching and example were blessed to many. He intimates this in



Phil. i. 13, 14. "The soldier that kept him" would be changed from time to time, and might carry the sound of the gospel elsewhere. One good result of his preaching



at Rome appears in the Epistle to Philemon, respecting Onesimus, a run-away slave, who seems to have been led to hear Paul "in his bonds;" and though no other of Paul's converts at Rome are distinctly mentioned in Scripture, yet history names others; as Poppæa, one of the wives of Nero, and some of his household, Phil. i. 13; iv. 22, and perhaps, but for this imprisonment, those valuable Epistles to the Ephesians, Colossians, Philippians, and Hebrews, would never have been penned. Thus God has work for his servants to do, wherever he sends them; and the "believers at Rome," who would be advantaged by his presence, were at that time numerous, as the list in Rom. xvi. shows. Narcissus, whose household is there mentioned, ver. 11, probably was a freedman of Claudius, who had not himself embraced Christianity.

A single discourse, perhaps the first public address which Paul gave at Rome, is particularly described in Acts xxviii. 23—31; it was a solemn appeal to the Jews from their own Old Testament Scriptures respecting Christ, and was partially successful. But as others, apparently

the greater part, rejected its message, he then avowed his intention of preaching to the Gentiles. He rejoiced that the salvation of God was sent unto them, and received all that came unto him. Assuredly the word of God did not return unto him void, and without effect.

“Christ crucified” will ever be the subject of every faithful minister; but in Paul’s time this preaching was, in fact, to proclaim salvation, through a persecuted outcast, who had been executed as a malefactor. Such a representation, as Hervey mentions, was objected to in our own land by the “fashionable world” of the last century; it was no less repugnant to the Jews in A. D. 62, because both slighted this great truth. “Jesus, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate. Let us go forth therefore unto him, without the camp, bearing his reproach. For here we have no continuing city: but we seek one to come,” Heb. xiii. 12—14.

It is truly observed that Luke, the companion and friend of Paul, as Irenæus states, at the close of his history, leaves us thirsting for more. It has been asked whether he was the same with Silas, who is not mentioned in Phil. i. 1, and might, if that Epistle was not written before 2 Tim. iv., have been prevented by his own death from continuing the history of Paul. But in some measure this defect is supplied by the brief historical circumstances which are alluded to in the Epistles, or letters, written by five of the apostles to the Christian churches at a distance. Nor will it be difficult to carry on the history of the Jews, till the period when their ruin as a nation took place—an awful event, which has been the type and emblem of the last great day, when the judgment threatened against all impenitent sinners shall be fulfilled. Reader, there are but two classes of men—those who serve the Lord, and those who serve him not: with which of these do you desire to be found? The distinction has ever been clearly marked. To use the words of Milton—

So shall the world go on,
To good malignant, to bad men benign:
Under her own weight, groaning, till the day
Appear of respiration to the just

And vengeance of the wicked, at return
Of Him so often promised to thy aid—
The woman's Seed, obscurely then foretold—
Now amplier known thy Saviour and thy Lord :
Last in the clouds of heaven to be reveal'd,
In glory of the Father, to dissolve
Satan with his perverted world, then raise
From the conflagrant mass, purged and refined,
New heavens, new earth, ages of endless date,
Founded in righteousness, and peace, and love,
To bring forth fruits, joy, and eternal bliss.

The characters who from a very early period disgraced the Christian church are thus described, by the apostle Jude, in solemn and impressive terms : “ These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear : clouds they are without water, carried about of winds ; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots ; raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame ; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever. And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him. These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts ; and their mouth speaketh great swelling words, having men's persons in admiration because of advantage. But, beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ ; how that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts. These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit. But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life,” Jude 12—21 : see also 2 Pet. ii.

CHAPTER IX.

CONDITION OF THE FIRST CHRISTIANS—THE WAL-
DENSES—DIVINE INSPIRATION OF THE APOSTLES
—WRITINGS OF PAUL.

THE progress of the gospel has ever been secret and unseen at first, but soon apparent by its effects, like the leaven, the growth of the mustard seed, or the fall of dew upon the grass, Luke xiii. 18—21; Deut. xxxii. 2. It must have been so at Rome, as well as in other places: one or two of a family were, in many instances, gathered into the flock of Christ, while others remained without. There were some few of whom it might be said that there was a church in their own house, like the family of Bethany, who were all beloved by Jesus, John xi. 5; but the words of our blessed Lord, Matt. x. 34, "I came not to send peace, but a sword," were very soon fulfilled. This state of things has been described by an ancient writer: "The husband, now cured of his former jealousy, turns his wife and her new modesty out of doors; the father, so tender of his undutiful heathen son, disinherits him, when he becomes a Christian, and obedient to his commands; and the master, hitherto so kind to a faithless servant, disbands him on his becoming religious and faithful. So much is the Christian name hated, notwithstanding the advantages of the gospel, that the husband prefers a false wife, the father a rebellious son, and the master a knavish servant, to having them good and faithful Christians." In such times, the rules given by the apostles for domestic conduct were remarkably instructive.

The Romans, and the ancient heathens in general, were tolerant to those of other religions, provided they consented to worship their gods also. But the Christian religion, like the ancient Mosaic law, at once declared, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. The temple of God could not agree with idols: light and

darkness are directly opposite to each other : the precepts of humility, meekness, and self-denial, are directly contrary to the pride of the natural heart ; and, therefore, the short and simple avowal, "I am a Christian," was sufficient to stimulate the malice which might otherwise have slept.

In their general habits and character, the first Christians much resembled the Waldenses, or inhabitants of the valleys of Piedmont. Though neither were exempt from human frailties, which occasionally diminished the light they shed around them, yet, like them, the ancient believers were pious, honest, and industrious, paying tribute where tribute was due, and looking to Christ as their Master, rather than to any mortal, as the head of their sect or party, 1 Cor. iii. 4, 5.

Indeed, the researches of historians will prove that the churches of the Waldenses may be traced back to a very early period, perhaps even to the apostolic age. Some have conjectured that St. Paul, in his way to Spain, visited the mountains in the north of Italy, and there planted these churches : others, with more ground of probability, have considered that the Christians, persecuted by the Roman emperors, were early driven to these rocky retreats, which have so often furnished subjects of interest to the traveller, the poet, the painter, and the Christian. It is certain, that the inhabitants of the valleys of Piedmont never seem to have imbibed the errors of the church of Rome : all the efforts of their enemies were directed to urge them to *enter*, not to *return* to her communion ; and while their simple and industrious practices recall to mind the histories of the New Testament, their doctrines may all be traced to the same holy source, not to the traditions or commandments of men, but to those passages in which the essential and fundamental truths of religion are plainly stated : such are John iii. 36 ; xi. 25, 26 ; xvii. 3, 4 ; Acts iv. 11, 12 ; xxvi. 23. Many more references might be given.

A Christian writer says, "How little comparatively do we possess of the inspired discourses of the apostles of Christ. From most of these heaven-taught ambassadors.

not so much as a single word has been transmitted to us. Like the holy men of God, who flourished before the birth of our Lord, they laboured, each in his own individual sphere: and their labours were blessed for the establishment and promotion of the cause of God during their lifetime; and, after their death, through the instrumentality of the disciples, who learned the truths of Christianity from their inspired lips, and conveyed it to the generation which followed."

The same author thus speaks of the Divine inspiration of the writers of the New Testament, as placing their works above those of any human authors: "For instance, how could they have given the discourse on the mount, or that which our Lord delivered immediately before his apprehension by the Jews, if they had not been the subjects of supernatural aid? Had they been left to themselves, or had not their minds been invigorated by supernatural influence, they could not have failed to forget some part of their Master's instructions altogether, and blend ideas or views of their own, with their accounts of the doctrines he delivered?"

"The books of the New Testament having been written to individuals, or to individual churches in different places, some time elapsed before a complete collection of them was obtained, and, consequently, before any appeal could be made to them collectively, as Divinely inspired. But, whenever they are quoted separately, the reference is obviously made to them as writings possessing more than human authority, and, in this respect, differing from all other works; and when collected, after their claims, and those of other books pretending to inspiration, had been thoroughly sifted, they are spoken of in the identical language that was employed, respecting the Scriptures of the Old Testament, with which they were placed on a level, and along with which they were read in the public assemblies of the Christians. They are called the Divine Gospels, the Scriptures of the Lord, the Oracles of the Lord, the Holy Scriptures, the Divine Scriptures. . . . The very circumstance, that some of the books were not at first universally received, proves the extreme scrupulosity

with which their claims were weighed, and that no writings were received as inspired, which did not possess indubitable marks of apostolicity." It is probable, however, that some of the discourses of our blessed Lord were taken down at the time, and committed to writing by his followers, which was a common practice in ancient times. In what language they were at first delivered, is a question that has often been discussed; for, at the time, there were many Greeks and Romans in Judæa, though the Hebrew language was still spoken, Acts xxii. 2.

With reference to the question how long the miraculous gifts of the Spirit remained in the church, the writer before quoted judiciously observes: "They must gradually have ceased, just as the persons were gradually removed who had been privileged to perform them; which at once obviates the objection of Gibbon, drawn from the absence of any excitement of wonder at the event. The great ends for which the gifts had been bestowed, had been attained; the authority of the apostles had been completely established; the different churches that had been planted by them had been confirmed in the faith of the gospel; and the collection of the books of the New Testament into one whole, presented such a complete body of evidence in favour of Christianity as superseded the necessity of any further visible interpositions, on the part of its Divine Author, in attestation of its truth. . . . That pretensions to inspiration should afterwards have been advanced cannot be matter of surprise. . . . And that there is a supernatural saving influence distinct from that which was miraculous, must appear convincingly evident to all who read the Scriptures with any degree of discrimination."

Even the apostles had not the power of working miracles at their pleasure; what they did was done by a strength higher than their own. St. Paul, no doubt, would gladly have healed both Epaphroditus and Trophimus, Phil. ii. 27, 2 Tim. iv. 20, his friends who had ministered to his own relief, not to speak of his own thorn in the flesh, from which he sought deliverance, and was long refused; though some have thought that this affliction

was afterwards removed, as it is not referred to in his later writings. But here is a proof that the power of working miracles was only given for a special purpose, to prove the real origin of Christianity to be from God, not to exalt his servants above their fellow-beings. This may reprove both the mistaken credulity of some real Christians, and also the lying wonders and pretended miracles of false professors, 2 Thess. ii. 9, which early began to shake the church of Christ to its foundations, when, as Gilly says, "men ceased to be satisfied with the ever-present miracle of the enlargement of the kingdom of the Messiah, and the fulfilment of the Divine promises. The exaggerated and fanciful histories of hermits in Egypt and the deserts of Syria, instead of the true Acts of the Apostles, were ever in men's minds, and the standard of piety was lowered." Such a change assuredly was to be regretted; for the Scriptures are all-sufficient, and they who forsake the living fountain have only broken cisterns left to them.

The state of mind shown by St. Paul during his imprisonment at Rome, presents to view the matured and ripened experience of the believer, such as is described by rev. J. Newton, as "grace in the full corn." The features of humility, spirituality, submission to the will of God, zeal for his glory, and tenderness to his fellow-men, are strongly apparent. Whatever were his sufferings, they appear to have been forgotten as soon as he heard the joyful news of the prosperity of a Christian church; and the spirit of prayer, which had been his characteristic from the time of his conversion, animated and cheered his hours of suspense, or expressed his earnest desires that the prosperity of which he heard might continue and increase. Thus he was willing to suffer, while he heard that others were at peace; and he could rejoice that his afflictions were made conducive to the furtherance of the gospel. How strikingly these graces appear in his Epistle to the Philippians! What a treasury of Christian thoughts and feelings is contained in the Epistles! How lamentable it is that they should often be neglected, or considered uninteresting, very much because they are read in detached

portions or chapters, instead of the whole scope and context being considered and practically applied.

It may be supposed that the sufferings of Paul during his imprisonment were often very great; yet he mentions them only when adverting to the kindness of his friends, Phil. iv. 14; 2 Tim. i. 17; and charges any neglect that might have occurred, rather to the want of opportunity than of inclination or care. The prisoners in heathen lands are generally dependent for food upon their own resources, or those of their friends, or else left to the will of their keepers; they have not the stated provision that in this country is made for depraved criminals. The Romish bishop and persecutor Bonner showed a very different spirit, when his disobedience to earthly rulers had brought him into confinement. Paul, however, could rejoice, in being the prisoner of the Lord—an honourable title!—and in the encouragement he was permitted to give to others, pointing them to Christ, as John the Baptist had done to his own disciples, when placed in a similar situation, Matt. xi. 1. Even when his confinement was most strict, he would have said, with one of our own reformers, “God hath cast me into a dungeon, but much better than I deserve, wherein I see no man but my keeper, nor can see any except they come to me. Something in the earth my lodging is, which is an example and memorial of my earthly affections, which God I trust will mortify, and of my sepulchre, whereunto I trust my Lord God will bring me in peace in his own good time. In the mean season, may he give me patience, lively hope, and his good Spirit.”

There is a striking resemblance between the Epistles to the Colossians and Ephesians: both being Gentile churches, not far distant from each other. The latter indeed, being the capital of the district including Laodicea, is supposed to be the Epistle mentioned in Col. iv. 16, though a different document has been produced, called the Epistle of Paul to the Laodiceans. This, however, is not deserving of credit, being merely a selection of detached passages from the genuine epistles of Paul, and is evidently a forgery. The following table exhibits the

corresponding passages between the epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians. The one being frequently a commentary on the other.

Eph. i. 2,	with Col. i. 1, 2	Eph. iv. 22—25,	with Col. iii. 9, 10
i. 6, 7	.. i. 13	iv. 17—21	.. i. 21, ii. 6, iii. 8-10
i. 10	.. i. 19, 20	iv. 29	.. iv. 6
i. 15, 16	.. i. 3, 4	iv. 32	.. iii. 12, 13
i. 17—21	.. i. 9—15	iv. 31	.. iii. 8
i. 22, iii. 10, 11	.. i. 16—18	v. 5	.. iii. 5
i. 19, ii. 1—5	.. ii. 12, 13	v. 6	.. iii. 6
ii. 1	.. i. 21	v. 7, 8	.. iii. 7, 8
ii. 13—16	.. i. 20, ii. 14	v. 15, 16	.. iv. 5
iii. i	.. x. 24, 25	v. 18—20	.. iii. 16, 17
iii. 3	.. x. 26—29	v. 21—23, vi. 1-9	.. iii. 18-25, iv. 1
iv. 2—4	.. ii. 12—15	vi. 18—20	.. iv. 2—4
iv. 16	.. ii. 19	vi. 21, 22	.. iv. 7—9

Most of the other Epistles have been already noticed.

The Epistle to the Hebrews differs from the rest, in not beginning with Paul's name and authorization as an apostle. He seems not to address his countrymen in that character, but as a brother he points out the superiority of Christianity to the Mosaic ritual in the strongest terms. His name would be known to them, and the insertion of it might have been attended with danger.

This Epistle is probably referred to in 2 Pet. iii. 15, 16; and it bears evident marks of proceeding from Paul, whose style, it has been truly said, abounds in illustrations never remote, but always such as those whom he addressed were conversant with. Many words and phrases peculiar to Paul might here be given : for instance, compare

Heb. iv. 12,	with Eph. vi. 17	Heb. v. 13,	with 1 Cor. iii. 2
viii. 6	.. 1 Tim. ii. 5	x. 22	.. Eph. v. 26
viii. 5	.. Col. ii. 17	xi. 10	.. 2 Cor. v. 1
iii. 6	.. 1 Tim. iii. 15	i. 2	.. Rom. viii. 17
ii. 16	.. Gal. iii. 29	ii. 14	.. Phil. ii. 7, 8
xii. 1-4, 12..	1 Cor. ix. 24	xii. 3	.. Gal. vi. 9
xiii. 16	.. Phil. iv. 18.	xiii. 20, 21	.. Rom. xv. 30, 33

There are other circumstances also, such as the general arrangement or method, and the rich overflowing of sentiment briefly expressed, which resemble the other writings of Paul. Some writers suppose that it was written when

he was at Cæsarea. These remarks will not be devoid of interest to those who attentively peruse this beautiful epistle : perhaps there is no portion of the sacred writings which more strongly sets forth the fulness and all-sufficiency of our ever-blessed Saviour, God manifest in the flesh, by his one offering, perfecting for ever them that are sanctified, chap. x. 14.

The Epistle to Philemon also must have a separate notice, from its pleasing style, and the fact that it was written to a private friend, upon business of a private nature ; thus showing the character of Paul in reference to common life. Perhaps the substance cannot be better expressed than in the words of Hervey : “ Onesimus was Philemon’s slave. He perfidiously deserted his master’s service, and still more perfidiously stole his goods. The fugitive, in his guilty rambles, providentially meets with St. Paul. He is charmed and captivated with that gracious gospel, which proclaims mercy even for the vilest of sinners. He becomes a sincere convert to the religion of Jesus, and is received into the spiritual patronage of the apostle, who, being informed of his dishonest conduct and obnoxious state, undertakes to bring about a reconciliation with his offended master, despatches him for this purpose with a letter to Philemon, and, among other persuasives, writes thus in the poor criminal’s behalf : ‘ If he hath wronged thee, or owed thee aught, put that on mine account. I Paul have written it with mine own hand, I will repay it.’ ”

But while admiring the conduct of Paul, let not the source of all his virtues be overlooked. Like the moon, his was a borrowed light, and bore but a faint resemblance to One infinitely brighter. Hervey adds : “ That which the zealous preacher of Christianity offered, the adored Author of Christianity executed. We had revolted from the Lord of all lords, and broke his holy commandments. The Son of God vouchsafes to become our Mediator. The punishment which we deserved, he endures ; the obedience which we owed, he fulfils.”

CHAPTER X.

PAUL IS RELEASED FOR A TIME—HIS SECOND IMPRISONMENT AND DEATH—GOSPELS OF MARK AND LUKE—HISTORY OF THE APOSTLES PETER AND THOMAS.

IT is evident, from the writings of Paul, that he was brought as a prisoner to Rome at two different times. His first appearance is referred to, 2 Tim. iv. 16, 17. The circumstances of his liberation are not recorded; nor is any scriptural account given of the places which he then visited. Some suppose that he went to Spain, Britain, and other western countries: that he desired to travel in that direction is seen from Rom. xv. 24. But there is no positive proof that he visited this island; neither can it be absolutely denied—and the name of St. Paul's church, in London, is thought to commemorate his visit. Some in the present day have witnessed the exhibition of a fine picture representing "Paul preaching to the Britons;" and they observe, "We should glory more than in royal blood, if we could believe ourselves the veritable descendants of those who knew Paul after the flesh." But all this is useless conjecture: and Claudia, who is mentioned in 2 Tim. iv. 21, is not expressly stated to have been the same who is mentioned as the wife of Pudens, by the Roman poet Martial, at a somewhat earlier date as the daughter of the British king Caractacus, who was carried prisoner to Rome, A. D. 51; yet there is no proof against this traditional record of her history, whether her conversion took place before or after Paul's arrival at Rome. Under Claudius Cæsar, Aulus Plautius was the first Roman governor who was settled in Britain—his predecessors were only the commanders of armies; and he, between the years A. D. 43 and 47, gained many victories over the ancient Britons, whose country was then considered as beyond the limits of the known world. They, as will be

remembered, were then mere savages, and given up to gross idolatry, and despised by the civilized Romans, as the meanest barbarians. The wife of this governor, Pomponia Græcina, was accused of having embraced a "strange foreign superstition," by which the Roman historian Tacitus probably meant Christianity, as no charge whatever could be brought against her moral character, even when regularly tried in the presence of her whole family. He adds, that "she survived her trial many years, but always led a gloomy melancholy life," which would probably be the idea that heathens had of true religion. The transactions at Rome would doubtless affect our own shores. There is an encampment still to be traced on the Malvern hills, between Worcestershire and Herefordshire, which has been supposed to have been formed during the contest which ended in the captivity of Caractacus. His daughter and her grandfather, Bran, or Brennius, are said to have embraced Christianity at Rome, possibly under the influence of Pomponia; and it seems that Bran afterwards returned to his native land, with other Christian teachers, one of whom is called Aristobulus: see Rom. xvi. 10. There is no authority in Scripture for this account, but there is nothing opposed to it; and it is probable that the gospel was carried into Britain at a very early period, though the bulk of the population remained heathens.

Tertullian, in the second century, says of our island, that the gospel had penetrated into those fastnesses which the Romans had not subdued. Alban, who is called the first British martyr, suffered about A. D. 300, in the last Roman persecution under Diocletian. During the earlier persecutions, there is no express record; but, according to some writers, our island seems to have been used as a place of refuge to those who fled from the oppressions of heathen rulers.

Early writers in the fourth and fifth century speak of Paul as having visited the islands of the ocean, the uttermost parts of the earth, as Britain was then considered: but those who held this opinion generally place the date of his release at A. D. 58, while it seems rather to have

taken place A. D. 61 or 62, which would give less time for the mission. Moreover, from Heb. xiii. 23, it seems he purposed going eastward, to Judæa; and the articles mentioned, 2 Tim. iv. 13, as left at Troas, (which he might naturally want in his imprisonment, whether the cloak were a part of his dress, or a wrapper to the parchments, as some think,) have given rise to the belief that Paul was taken prisoner, the second time, in the neighbourhood of that city. Others think that he went to Crete, Tit. i. 5, and would date his Epistle to Titus and his first Epistle to Timothy at a subsequent period; but this is most likely a mistake, 2 Tim. iv. 10. However, it may not be impossible that he returned, as it is said, from Crete to Rome, about A. D. 65, on account of the persecution of the Christians by the tyrannical emperor Nero, for the purpose of strengthening and comforting the believers. This cruel tyrant accused the Christians of having set fire to Rome, though history states that the deed was perpetrated by himself, from the vain-glorious desire of giving his own name to a new city. An account of his tyranny and excesses does not belong to this narrative. Paul justly compares him to a "lion."

Tacitus, a Roman historian, says: "Nero proceeded with his usual artifice. He found a set of profligate and abandoned wretches, who were induced to confess themselves guilty, and on the evidence of such men a number of Christians were convicted: they were put to death with exquisite cruelty, and to their sufferings Nero added mockery and derision. Some were covered with the skins of wild beasts, and left to be devoured by dogs; others were nailed to the cross; numbers were burned alive; and many, covered over with inflammable matter, were lighted up, when the day declined, to serve as torches during the night. For the convenience of seeing this tragic spectacle, the emperor lent his own gardens. He added the sports of the Circus, and assisted in person, sometimes driving a chariot, and occasionally mixing with the rabble in the dress of a charioteer."

It is generally considered that both Peter and Paul suffered martyrdom during this persecution, and that the

former was crucified, but that Paul, as being a Roman citizen, was beheaded. The supposed place of his death is shown, about three miles from the city, as well as the tombs in which their remains were buried. There is much of Romish superstition in these traditions; and the bronze statue of Peter, which is still an object of idolatrous worship, once formed the image of Jupiter Capitolinus, though now it stands in the magnificent church called St. Peter's.

There is a prison still existing at Rome, in which it is said both these apostles were confined. It is remarkable as being perhaps the oldest building in the city, and



derives its name—the Mamertine prison—from Ancus Martius, the fourth king of ancient Rome; Mamers being the Oscan word for Mars. To this relic of antiquity the visitor descends under the little church of S. Ginseppe de Falegnami, (built in 1539,) and finds two subterranean cells, in the lower of which, only six feet and a half in

height, and nineteen by nine in size, the apostles were confined, according to tradition, which also points out the very pillar to which Peter was bound; and a legendary tale is told, pointing out a spot where a fountain of water miraculously appeared for him to baptize his jailer and others. This lower prison was used for Jugurtha and others who were starved to death.

The Gospels of Mark and Luke were written about the time of the first Roman persecution. Luke is supposed to have committed to writing the Gospel which Paul preached; and he continued a faithful friend to the apostle, when probably, through the violence of persecution, many of his fellow-labourers had been called elsewhere, and "Demas had forsaken him, having loved this present world," 2 Tim. iv. 10, 11; though both had once shared the friendship of the apostle, Col. iv. 14. Like Orpah and Ruth, many set out together, but are not alike stedfast in the cause of God.

St. Mark evidently wrote his Gospel under the direction of Peter, with whom he appears to have been connected, either by the ties of nature or grace, 1 Pet. iv. 13. Tradition relates that he was one of those disciples who forsook the Saviour, John vi. 66, but was afterwards restored by the instrumentality of Peter. There seems no reason to deny that he was the same with John Mark, who was nephew to Barnabas, as already mentioned. A few more particulars must be added respecting Simon Peter, without going into the numerous fables of Romanists, or even the contradictory statements of earlier writers. It is generally allowed that he resided at Antioch for several years, preaching to the inhabitants of the neighbouring parts of Asia, to whom he wrote his first Epistle: but different meanings have been fixed upon for the church "at Babylon," which is there mentioned. Some say there was a town of that name in Cappadocia; others place it in Assyria, or Egypt; others say that Rome, the spiritual Babylon, is here intended. From that city he wrote, most probably, his second Epistle; for though some deny that he was ever there at all, the Gospel of Mark seems to have been intended for Roman readers, and the mass of

early historians say that he was there for a short time, and suffered martyrdom about A. D. 64 or 65. From the obscurity which rests upon the closing scenes of the lives of the apostles, let us learn to regard the living conduct of men, rather than their dying circumstances.

It is by no means certainly proved that any of the apostles suffered martyrdom, except Peter, James, and Paul. From the language of early writers, it has been conjectured that the remainder died a natural death; and that the common reports as to their sufferings arose after the days of Constantine, when many held death by martyrdom in extravagant estimation. There seems more truth in the assertion of Heracleon, who lived during the second century, that the public confession required by the Saviour, Matt. x. 32, may be made by a Christian life as well as by a public avowal before a persecuting magistrate: and he cites the examples of Matthew, Philip, and Thomas. The Greek word *martyr*, anciently meant a witness or confessor of any kind; in which sense it is used in Acts i. 8; ii. 32. In this sense Wickliffe was a martyr, that is, a confessor of the truth, though he was not actually put to death on account of it. Mosheim says, "I would not reject all that is clearly attested by Origen, Eusebius, Gregory Nazianzen, Paulinus, Jerome, Socrates, and some more ancient writers quoted by Eusebius; but what is attested only by authors subsequent to these, or unknown, I would not readily believe, unless facts offer themselves to corroborate the truth."

It seems that Peter, when at Rome, again met with Simon Magus, and rebuked his evil practices. Afterwards, when the persecution arose, the Christians earnestly entreated him to withdraw, and reserve himself for future service. This he at first refused, but afterwards consented to do; and it is stated that, having taken leave of the brethren, he left the city. At the gate, he met his Lord, who said to him, "I am come to Rome to be crucified a second time." Peter apprehended himself to be reprov'd, and that our Lord was to be crucified in his servant; whereupon he went back, most ready and cheerful, to acquiesce in the Divine will. The death he

was adjudged to was crucifixion; but some writers say he entreated that he might suffer with his head downwards, affirming that he was unworthy to die in the same posture wherein his Lord had suffered. Happy man, (as Chrysostom glosses,) to be set in the readiest way of travelling from earth to heaven. His wife, 1 Cor. ix. 5, suffered martyrdom a short time before him: he encouraged her, and exhorted her to remember the Lord. His conduct as a husband and father has been commended by many ancient writers.

All this may not be authentic; but there is no doubt as to the change which the grace of God wrought in the mind of Peter. Naturally warm and eager, as Josephus describes the Galileans in general to have been, how strange to him must the precepts of the mild and gentle Saviour at first have appeared, Matt. xvi. 24; xviii. 20. But he lived to exemplify them himself, and recommend them to others; and it seems that among his last purposes was that of writing the history of our Lord's sojourn upon earth. This was executed by his disciple Mark, who afterwards went into Egypt, where he also is stated to have suffered martyrdom, being bound and dragged about till he died, by the hands of the idolaters who seized him when engaged in his private devotions, at the time of a public festival in honour of one of their false gods.

There are many particulars in the Gospel by Mark which indicate it to have been written for the Romans and other Gentile Christians. Such are the details as to Jewish customs, chap. vii. 3, etc. Thus it was the will of God, that three accounts of the prediction of our Lord respecting the destruction of Jerusalem, Matt. xxiv., Mark xiii., Luke xxi., should have been penned before that event actually took place. And perhaps there is no passage which more distinctly shows that all the three historians recorded the same truths, yet each possessing different resources and different objects in writing than the commencement of this part of the Gospels. Luke says simply, "they asked him;" Matthew mentions "his disciples;" Mark enumerates them, "Peter and James, and John and Andrew." The reader may also notice the

application to the parable of the sower, Matt. xiii. 11—16; Mark iv. 11, 12; Luke xiii. 10.

The Gospel of Luke is written in a more elegant style than the others, and will bear comparison with the Greek classics, as was elsewhere mentioned. He was probably a man of some education, and is by tradition noticed both as a physician and a painter. He was much beloved by St. Paul, and is generally supposed to have been the brother whose praise was in all the churches, 2 Cor. viii. 18. No certain account can be given either as to the time or manner of his death; but it is thought to have taken place in Greece, where he wrote the Acts, A.D. 64. Neither can the precise year be stated in which Andrew, the brother of Peter, suffered martyrdom; but it is considered that he travelled in the border countries of Europe and Asia, and was crucified at Patræ, a town of Achaia, where he hung for two days, and continued teaching the people. Whatever be said as to this close of his public life, the beginning of it, as described in John i., should be remembered. He had the honour of being the first preacher among the apostles, for he preached to his own brother Simon, and brought him to Jesus.

“This gospel must first be preached among all nations,” said the blessed Saviour, when he foretold the destruction of Jerusalem: like the rest of his words, it was strikingly fulfilled. Dr. Lardner describes a monument in Portugal, which evidently refers to the persecution of Nero, which has been repeatedly discussed by modern writers:—

To Nero Claudius Cæsar
Augustus High Priest,
For clearing the Province
Of Robbers, and Those
Who Taught Mankind
A new Superstition.

Some doubts, however, have been suggested as to its authenticity; but though no account is given as to the preachers in this western extremity of the old world, more can be said respecting the east. When the Portuguese, in the sixteenth century, first explored the peninsula of India, they found no less than fifteen or sixteen thousand

families called St. Thomas' Christians. "We have never heard of the pope," they said; "but we are right, whatever you from the west may be; for we were taught by those who came from the place where men were first called Christians." Origen, Nicephorus, and others, describe Thomas as preaching in Parthia, and other eastern lands, till he came to India, and travelled as far as Sumatra. Alas! Christianity there, as elsewhere, soon became corrupted; and in many instances the ignorance and superstition of its professors show a near resemblance to the church of Rome. They have, however, as well as the heathens in the surrounding country, received benefit from European missionaries. Among these churches, the first Danish missionaries settled in 1705.

Dr. Buchanan has given a very interesting account of his researches among these Syrian Christians, as they are called, who dwelt among the mountains, on the Malabar or western coast of India, in the year 1806. He describes the country as exhibiting a varied scene of hill and dale, and winding streams; the mountains not barren, but covered with forests; the churches as not unlike some old buildings in England, with sloping roofs, pointed arch windows, and buttresses on most of the walls. The sound of church-bells made him almost forget that he was in Hindostan, though now and then he saw a heathen temple not far off. He says, "Not far from Cranganore is the town of Paroor, where there is an ancient Syrian church. I took a drawing of it: the tradition is, that the apostle continued at this place for a time, before he went to preach on the opposite coast of Coromandel, where he was put to death. The fact is certainly of little consequence; but I am satisfied that we have as good ground for believing that the apostle Thomas died in India, as that the apostle Peter died at Rome." Some who have carefully examined the subject, however, consider that the Christian teacher referred to was not Thomas, the disciple of Christ, but another preacher of the same name, about three centuries afterwards.



THE APOSTLES AT JERUSALEM.

CHAPTER XI.

LIVES OF THE OTHER APOSTLES—REMARKS ON THE
FALL OF JERUSALEM.

THE following outline contains a summary of the history of the apostles of whom nothing can be related, except from the testimony of ecclesiastical history. Andrew probably laboured on the shores of the Black Sea, near the modern Constantinople, and died in Greece. Philip is reported to have ended his days at Hierapolis in Phrygia. Thomas, as before mentioned, seems to have travelled eastward to Parthia, Media, Persia, and India. Bartholomew took perhaps a more southerly course, through Arabia. Matthew is also said to have gone eastward, into the modern Persia. Of Simon nothing can be certainly stated.

Jude, the brother of James, is supposed to have preached in the north of Syria. From this account, it seems that the labours of the apostles, and their immediate successors, reached not far beyond the limits of the modern Turkish empire. But the prayer of our blessed Lord extended, John xvii. 20, not only to them, but to all who should believe, "through their word." Their doctrine did not perish with them, as a cunningly devised fable must have done; but, when four hundred years had elapsed, it was well known that "these fishermen, publicans, and tent-makers persuaded not only the Romans and their subjects, but also the Scythians, Sarmatæ, Indians, Persians, Daci, Hyrcanians, Britons, Cimmerians, and Germans, to embrace the religion of Him who had once been crucified."

The scanty accounts on record as to St. Matthew and Matthias have been before alluded to. Some of the other apostles may therefore here be separately mentioned, with a brief notice of the traditions relating to their sufferings. Bartholomew is said to have preached in Phrygia, Lycaonia, and Armenia, where it is believed that he suffered a cruel death, his skin being first taken off; it is also stated that he visited India, or rather Ethiopia, which is sometimes called by that name, and carried thither the Gospel by Matthew. He is supposed to have been the same with Nathanael, being generally mentioned as the companion of Philip; and if Nathanael was not one of the apostles, who witnessed the ascension of Christ, there is no record that the promise contained in John i. 51 was fulfilled to him. The name of Bartholomew might be merely a sort of surname, denoting some relative capacity or discipleship. Some Jews are stated to have called themselves Tholmeans, from Tholmai, the disciple of Heber, the great ancestor of the Hebrews; and Bartholomew might have been one of these. It is certain that Nathanael was not unlearned in the opinions and wisdom of his ancestors and countrymen.

Philip the apostle must not be confounded with Philip the deacon or evangelist, who is so often mentioned in the Acts. Though frequently named in the Gospels, little is known of his subsequent life. He is reported to

have laboured in Upper Asia and Phrygia; and a particular account is given of his drawing off the people of Hierapolis from serpent-worship, and his subsequent martyrdom. Some say he was hanged against a pillar, others that he was crucified.

Simon Zelotes, or the Zealot, is supposed to have been so called from a profession he made, with others of the Pharisees, before he was brought to Jesus. Some of the Zealots were a lawless and ungovernable race. Whatever he was before his conversion, he appears afterwards to have been zealous for the truth; which he is said to have preached in Africa, and also in Britain, where he was crucified. But all these accounts rest upon grounds very different from the statements of Scripture. Doubtless, the true histories of the apostles were known to their contemporaries and immediate successors; yet even among them they sought not the praise of men, rejoicing rather that their names were written in heaven.

Jude, the brother (or kinsman) of our blessed Lord, after the flesh, was the author of that short but solemn Epistle which bears his name; he is elsewhere called Lebbæus, or Thaddæus, which two surnames may possibly, as Jerome considers, denote his character; the first signifying prudence and understanding—the second, a spirit of praise to God. The same writer, and other historians also, describe his travels through Arabia, Syria, and Mesopotamia, and his visit to Abgarus, governor of Edessa. There is a tradition referring to that instrument of Romish deceit and imposture, called “Our Saviour’s Letter,” said to have been written to this ruler, by the blessed Saviour; but it is too trifling for insertion in this place. Jude was the apostle who put the question, “Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?” being then ignorant of the spiritual presence of Christ. He is supposed to have been a husbandman, supported by the labour of his hands; at least, it is certain that his descendants were such. Two of his grandsons were, after the destruction of Jerusalem, brought before the Roman emperor Domitian, as the representatives of the royal family of David. Their simple account of themselves,

and their hands hardened by labour, proved their humble mode of life, and dispelled the jealousy of the tyrant, who had dreaded lest they should set themselves up as the heads of their nation.

Domitian, however, continued his persecuting measures against the Christians, not sparing even his own kinsman, the consul Flavius Clemens, whom he put to death, though he had been high in his favour. This man appears to have been a sincere Christian, who avoided entangling himself in the things of this life; but the malice of the emperor did not rest satisfied with punishing this man or his sons, on whom the succession of the empire had been fixed. He banished the wife of Flavius and another female, both nearly related to him: the latter to the isle of Patmos, where the apostle John was sent, as will shortly be stated; the former to another desolate spot called Pandataria. In those days, the Christians were glad to escape observation, and often took shelter in the catacombs, or vast places hollowed under ground, which were used for burying dead bodies, among the ancient heathens; many of whose inscriptions have been plainly deciphered. Afterwards these sepulchres were looked upon as the tombs of the martyrs; and many superstitious rites were observed, as the customs of paganism gradually passed into the usages of Popery in times of outward peace and prosperity, when the offer of Satan, which Christ had rejected, was accepted by his professed followers: compare Luke iv. 6; Rev. xiii. 2. To this change it may suffice us here very briefly to advert, only observing that the feasts of Christmas and Easter, with the celebration of the first of May, and the old practice of keeping wakes and fairs in our country villages, may be traced up to the heathen festivals in honour of their false gods, which it was supposed that converts from paganism would be loth to relinquish. By these means, it is observed, the Christians increased in number, but decreased in virtue, until they were purged by later persecutions.

James, the brother of Jude, appears to have been the first Christian bishop of Jerusalem: whether the son of Joseph the carpenter, by a former wife, or a more distant

relative, is not expressly told; though he is usually supposed to have been his nephew, the son of Alphæus or Cleophas and of Mary, the sister to the mother of our Lord. His name is frequently mentioned in the Acts, also 1 Cor. xv. 7. His excellent character gained him the appellation of the Just, even amongst his bigoted, persecuting countrymen. After Paul had escaped their malice, they next resolved to attack James; and in the interval between the death of Festus and the succeeding governor of Judæa, when Ananias the high priest acted as their chief magistrate, they hastily summoned a council, and called the apostle to appear before them. Placing him on a pinnacle or wing of the temple, they asked his opinion of Jesus, desiring he would correct the false opinions of the people; and flattering him as a most just man, esteemed by the whole nation. He boldly confessed Christ to be "Jesus the Son of man: he sits in heaven, on the right hand of the Majesty on high, and will come again in the clouds of heaven." The people below joined him in proclaiming, "Hosanna to the Son of David." Upon this, the Scribes and Pharisees threw him down from the place where he stood, crying out, that Justus himself was seduced, and was become an impostor. He spent all the breath that remained to him in this prayer, "I beseech thee, O Lord God, heavenly Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." A bystander begged them to spare him, for he was praying for them. But they showered stones upon him, till one, more hasty than the rest, with a fuller's club, beat out his brains. Josephus mentions this death of James the Just, the brother of Jesus whom they call Christ, as one of the great crimes committed by the Jews at this period, which drew down upon them the vengeance of the Almighty. It showed, indeed, that they were ripening for ruin, 1 Thess. ii. 15; and is also a satisfactory evidence to the character of that man, whose writings so strongly recommend a holy and consistent life. Let them not be supposed to contradict the assertion of Paul, that faith only justifies: both writers would agree in looking for the effects of true religion on the lives of men—not in word

only, but also in power. James is generally commended, moreover, for his regular observance of the Jewish ritual, and for his prayerful spirit: he is said, by his prayers, to have obtained rain from heaven during a season of great drought.

This account is not intended for a history of the Jews; but a few particulars must be given, to show how the sceptre departed from Judah, when the Messiah came. In A. D. 8, that is, the very year when it is computed our Lord Jesus first attended the passover with his supposed parents, Archelaus, the son of Herod, was deposed on account of some misdemeanours of which he was guilty, and Judæa became a Roman province. The name of Pontius Pilate, A. D. 25, need scarcely be mentioned; and that of Felix, A. D. 52, and of Festus, A. D. 61, as Roman governors, sent thither after some time had intervened, is familiar to every reader of the New Testament: the latter was succeeded by Albinus, A. D. 63, and in the next year by Gessius Florus, both of whom evinced great disregard to the welfare of their subjects; and the last, by his oppressive administration, led to the war which shortly after broke out. The tumultuous state of the land at this time was shown by numerous insurrections and the factious leaders who from time to time appeared. The words of the Jews, to the Saviour, "We were never in bondage to any man," and the remark, "the Romans will come and take away both our place and nation," both expressions being uttered in casual conversation, portray the state of excitement which even then prevailed, and the falsehood of the chief priest's professions of regard for Cæsar, when Christ was accused.

When bearing the wrath of his Father for the sins of man which were imputed to him, and looking forward to the dreadful sufferings of the impenitent Jews, the blessed Son of God observed, "If they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in a dry?" It is necessary to bear in mind, that the destruction of Jerusalem was a punishment for the wickedness of its inhabitants; it is, therefore, a strong warning to the ungodly in later times. It was a providential dispensation, far more signal and striking

than the usual course of events in other wars; as such it must ever be regarded. Josephus, an historian of their own nation, has recorded the ruin of the Jews; and though his work is blended with personal vanity and flattery to the Roman rulers, there is no reason to doubt his testimony as to his own country, that "there was no kind of evil unpractised among them." Moreover, an inspired writer thus described this corrupt generation, "They please not God, and are contrary to all men."

"Had they maintain'd allegiance firm and sure,
And kept the faith immaculate and pure,
Then the proud eagles of all-conquering Rome
Had found one city not to be o'ercome.
Cured of the golden calves, their fathers' sin,
They set up self, that idol-god within:
View'd a Deliverer with disdain and hate,
Who left them still a tributary state;
Seized fast his hand, held out to set them free
From a worse yoke, and nail'd it to the tree.
Thence date their sad declension and their fall,
Their woes thus unrepeal'd, thence date them all."

COWPER.

"His blood be on us and on our children," they had said; and the curse descended on them. During the forty years which followed, the crucifixion of Jesus, scarcely any praiseworthy action of a public nature is recorded respecting the Jews, except their refusal of idolatrous worship to the image of the tyrant Caligula, A. D. 40; at which time the Christians enjoyed a short season of rest, Acts ix. 31. The emperor spoke of the ambassadors from Jerusalem as a poor, foolish people, who could not believe him to be a god. Such was the height of his madness and folly. The storm then blew over; but the avarice and injustice of Florus led him to threaten an encroachment on the treasures of the Jewish temple, and from that time all subjection to the Roman power was at an end. Cestius Gallus was sent with a military detachment to reduce the province: humanly speaking, he might soon have succeeded; but, with a sudden panic, he withdrew his army, who were pursued and put to flight, and Vespasian was afterwards sent with another force, to conquer Judæa,

A. D. 68. This interval was ordered by the providence of God, that the Christians might have an opportunity to escape, as many of them unquestionably did, Luke xxi. 20—22; Matt. xxiv. 14—20. The standards of the heathen soldiers might well be called “the abomination of desolation.”

Fearful and portentous signs had for some time been observed. These are said to have been: 1. A meteor, resembling a sword, hanging over Jerusalem during a whole year. This is supposed to have been a comet. 2. A peculiar and supernatural brightness visible near the temple for half an hour, on the eighth of the month Zeanthious. 3. An animal, that was being led to sacrifice, gave birth to a lamb, in the temple, in the midst of the worshippers assembled at the passover. 4. About the sixth hour of night, the eastern gate of the temple was seen to open without human interference. This gate was of solid brass, and required twenty men to close it; it was also secured by bolts and bars. 5. Chariots and armed men appeared visibly, passing in the air about Jerusalem. 6. A shaking was distinctly heard at night, in the temple, accompanied by a voice which said, “Let us depart hence.” All these occurrences are mentioned by Josephus; but he also adds, as the last and most fearful omen, the appearance of a rustic who in peace and war for seven years and five months incessantly denounced, “Woe to the city, the temple, and the people!” He neither thanked those who relieved, nor complained of those who struck him. At last, after the siege had begun, he exclaimed, “Woe to myself!” and dropped down dead, being struck by a stone from one of the Roman engines.

There was something of a supernatural character in these sights and sounds, which must have struck many with alarm and awe, though some may be fabulous, and others not departures from the ordinary course of nature. For fifteen months, Vespasian laid waste the northern district of the country, beginning with Gadara, where the inhabitants once rejected Christ, Mark v., and where the ruins of a Roman theatre have been lately traced; and then, being recalled to Rome, where he was appointed

emperor, the Jewish war was delayed for two years. Thus God, in mercy, granted a respite, like the space before the flood : and some perhaps improved it ; yet it seems that at last there were many taking refuge in Jerusalem who “left their all behind, and fled to save their lives,” and still more, who, despising the warnings of the Saviour, entered from the country, to keep the passover, and thus added to the multitudes who perished from faction, famine, and war, when Titus returned with the Roman army, and encamped on the Mount of Olives. Yet many, even to the last, were deluded with vain hopes of national prosperity, till sudden destruction took them unawares.

Even thus, amid thy pride and luxury,
O Earth ! shall that last coming burst on thee,
That secret coming of the Son of man,
When that great Husbandman shall wave his fan,
Sweeping, like chaff, thy wealth and pomp away,

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Oh ! who shall then survive ?
Oh ! who shall stand and live ?



CHAPTER XII.

TRADITIONS RESPECTING ST. JOHN—THE BOOK OF
REVELATION—THE SEVEN CHURCHES OF ASIA,
AND THEIR PRESENT STATE—CONCLUSION.

SIMEON, the son of Cleophas, had succeeded James as bishop of Jerusalem. His history belongs to a later period; but it is worthy of remark, that bearing in mind the warning of our Lord, Matt. xxiv. 15, 16, he and his fellow-Christians, at the approach of the Roman army, left Jerusalem, and retired to Pella, a small town in the hilly region beyond Jordan: thus, it is probable, not a single Christian perished in the destruction of that devoted city. Let us be equally desirous to improve all the warnings our blessed Lord has given to us.

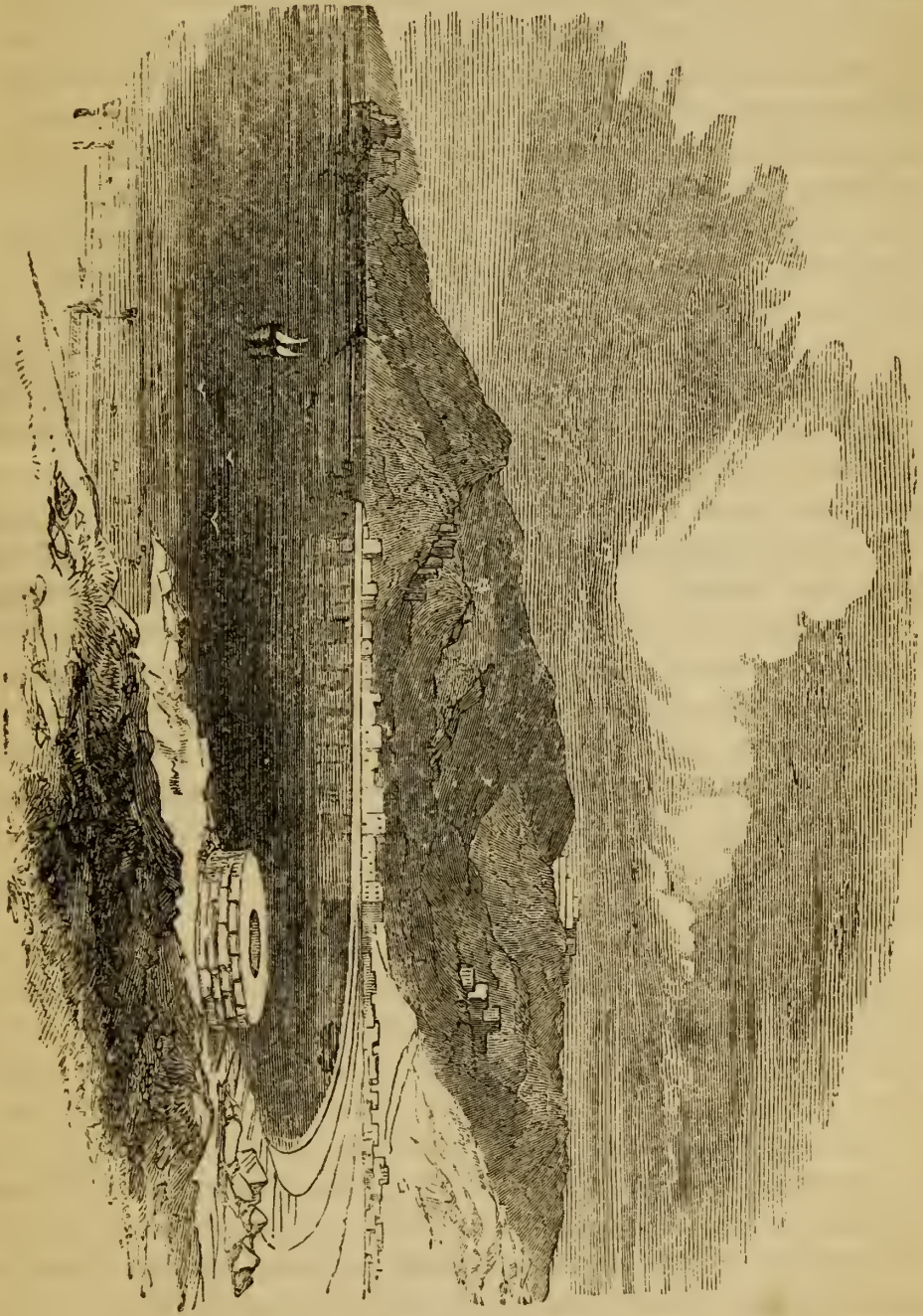
John, probably the youngest of all the apostles, was the only one who survived to witness the destruction of this far-famed city. The last account of him in the Gospel history refers to the care he took of Mary, the mother of Jesus. At some time, probably after her death, he travelled into Asia Minor, “confirming the churches” already there, and erecting new ones in that province, which seems to have been his especial charge. At a later period, when the cleaving to the Jewish ceremonies had been succeeded by other erroneous opinions springing up in the church, he wrote his Gospel, to supply what his brethren had omitted, and to correct some of the false opinions which were then propagated. These have been divided by Milner into two great classes: the Gnostics or Docetæ, or the followers of Simon Magus; and the Ebionites, a Jewish sect. The former denied that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, was truly man; the latter denied that he was God. A full detail of their errors will not be given here; but those who have examined their histories will observe how correctly they were described by St. John in his first Epistle, chap. ii., iv. Milner says, “It does

not appear, by any evidence, that these men were persecuted for their religion. They spake of the world, and the world heard them. In our own times, persons of a similar stamp would willingly ingratiate themselves with real Christians, and yet, at the same time, avoid the cross of Christ, and whatever would expose them to the enmity of the world. Where false views of Christ are held, a man's estimate of his own state as a sinner, and his views on all other subjects, must be equally wrong.

“What think ye of Christ? is the test,
To try both your state and your scheme?
You cannot be right in the rest,
Unless you think rightly of him.”

Perhaps there is no portion of Christian doctrine more beautifully simple than the summary given in the first Epistle of John, which was written not long before the year A. D. 96—so that the author was then nearly one hundred years of age. His two other Epistles were of a more private nature. There have been different opinions as to the address of the second: some writers supposing that a Christian church is here personified as “the elect lady and her children;” others, with more correctness, that the words *Kyria* and *Electa*, one or both, might be proper names. The third Epistle is evidently inscribed to *Gaius* or *Caius*, an eminent Christian, named also by St. Paul, Rom. xvi. 23.

The book of Revelation was probably written at a later period, when John, as he there says, was banished to the isle of Patmos. This was under the persecution of Domitian, about A. D. 96, after the apostle had been sent bound to Rome, and miraculously preserved, it is said, when cast into a caldron of boiling oil, or rather, of oil set on fire. This statement has been questioned; but the fact of his banishment rests on the authority of Scripture. There, on a barren lonely rock, apart from all religious friends and outward means of grace, this holy man enjoyed communion with his glorified Lord, a revelation of future events on earth, and visions of the glory and happiness of heaven.



At the present day, many missionaries have been employed for years, on the coast of the Mediterranean, in promoting the instruction and improvement of the mass of the inhabitants; but considerable opposition has been made to their efforts, by the priests of the Greek and Armenian church, who have given repeated orders to those under their influence, to receive no English or American books, or tracts, and to burn the Gospels which have been circulated among them. Priests of the Romish church have also travelled in these countries, and have given advice of the same nature, saying, "Put these books into the flames; as long as you have them, you have a devil in your house." In the isle of Patmos, a monastery and school have long existed on the spot where the cave or grotto is, in which St. John is said to have sojourned. But the reading of the New Testament, as a school-book, has there been totally forbidden, as well as in every other of the surrounding islands. There were, in 1838, about three thousand inhabitants in this island, being all Greeks; and they have a degree of freedom and independence which is not common in the east. Most of them lead a seafaring life; others go to Asia Minor for work, during the summer, and return with money and corn to pass the winter at home. The mines referred to in the early history of the church are considered to have been quarries of marble: among these the exiles under the Roman government were frequently employed.

Upon the death of Domitian, John returned from Patmos, and resumed his superintendence of the Asiatic churches. He is generally supposed to have died when nearly one hundred years of age, or about seventy years after the death of Christ. Even in his own lifetime, strange opinions were spread respecting him, John xxi. 22, 23; it is not, therefore, wonderful that there should be a difference in the accounts of him given in after times. Some interesting fragments may however be gathered, as agreeing with the inspired record as to his character and conduct. Jerome describes him when very aged, as led by others to the church, where, when too feeble to pronounce a discourse, he used constantly to say these words.

“Little children, love one another.” And when asked why he always spoke the same, he answered, “Because it was the command of our Lord; and that if they did nothing else, this was enough.” The reader will recollect the loving spirit that pervades his writings. But he had not the false notion of charity which leads some to associate with the enemies of truth. It is said, that once when at Ephesus, being about to bathe, he hastily left the bath, saying, “Let us flee, lest the bath should fall, while Cerinthus (a noted heretic) is within it:” so careful were the early disciples to avoid needless intercourse with the opposers of their religion. This incident seems to have been told by Polycarp, the pupil of this apostle.

Another anecdote of St. John is related by Eusebius. In one of the Asiatic churches, he observed a promising young man, whom he recommended to the especial charge of the pastor in that place. The youth, after a time, became idle and intemperate, and joined a band of robbers, or outlaws, and became their captain. John, revisiting the church, made inquiry respecting him. “He is dead,” replied the pastor; “that is, dead to God:” an expression often used by the primitive Christians, when speaking of the ungodly world. The haunts of the robbers being described, John went thither, and offering himself to them, he said, “Bring me to your leader.” The youth recognised him, and fled. “My son,” cried the aged apostle, “why fleest thou from thy father, unarmed and old? Fear not; as yet there remaineth hope of salvation. Believe me, Christ hath sent me.” The young man stood still, trembled, and wept. John prayed, exhorted, and brought him back; nor did he leave him till he judged him fully restored.

Cerinthus was by birth a Jew, who, having studied the heathen philosophy, made a strange combination of the errors of the Jews and Gnostics. He taught with the latter, that the supreme God dwelt in the *pleroma*, or fulness, with the spiritual beings called *Æons*; that Christ, one of these *Æons*, rested on the man Jesus, enabling him to perform miracles; but that Jesus alone suffered death, and was merely the son of Joseph and Mary. That the

Supreme Being had one only Son, Monogenes, who begat Logos, or the Word, who was still inferior; and that there were two of the higher Æons, called Life and Light, and that the latter of these entered into John the Baptist; with other spirits of a lower order: one of which, Demiurgus, was the creator of the world, and sent Moses to Israel with laws that were to be always binding. The Gospel of John, chap. i., is a plain contradiction to all this, proving that Christ is the true Logos or Word, the first begotten, one with God, having light and life in himself; that John the Baptist was a mere man, the forerunner of Jesus, who was appointed to abolish the law of Moses, and bring in those substantial benefits which that had shadowed forth. The difference, then, between the apostle and Cerinthus will be found to bear on the plainest doctrines of our religion; and light and darkness could not be more opposite.

The preceding short account of the truly primitive or first Christians may well be closed by a sketch of the seven churches in Asia, as enumerated in Rev. ii., iii. "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." There is much in the addresses, which John was commissioned to send to them, that is suitable to professing Christians in every age. The same variety of character may ever be traced. Some have the zeal and perseverance of the Ephesians, with their loss of first love; others possess the faithful patience of Smyrna and Philadelphia, the mixed character of Pergamos and Thyatira, the deadness of Sardis, or the lukewarmness of Laodicea. Many writers have concluded that the epistles to these churches, in fact, describe the characteristics of the Christian church during seven successive periods. But it is not needful here to dwell upon these opinions, or to explain the words used in each of these exhortations. A short general view of the ancient and modern condition of these spots will be found more suited to the purpose of this work.

The foundation and early progress of the church at Ephesus has been already described. No Christian society had a more prosperous commencement. Doubtless it

flourished also under the care of Timothy, when it seems to have included a considerable number of members of all classes and ranks. He seems to have been removed by death about the time of John's banishment. How impressive is the warning here given against the first tendencies to apostasy! Rev. ii. 4—7. This is not the change produced by growing experience in the mind of the real Christian, when constancy and vigour of affection succeed to the ardent expression of feeling; but it is the withdrawal of the heart from those habits of exertion, self-denial, and opposition to evil, which might still be outwardly persevered in, though the mind was less engaged by them. A solemn call was addressed to these professors, warning them to see that within, as well as without, no loss is suffered. The Ephesians are now a few Greek peasants, living in extreme wretchedness, among the ruins of former magnificence. Only one professor of Christianity was found there by Mr. Hartley, in 1826, and no public worship or institutions of any kind that could be called Christian; while the plough has passed over the site of the city, where now the eagle yells, and the jackal moans.

Smyrna is still as flourishing a city as any in the east. The history of the introduction of Christianity there is unknown. Its situation is favourable to trade, and it has been visited by many modern missionaries. It contains about one hundred and thirty thousand souls—of whom twenty-five thousand profess Christianity; having three Greek churches; while the Jews possess several synagogues. But most of the inhabitants are the followers of Mohammed, whose religion, it has been truly remarked, could never have gained ground in the east, had not his doctrine, derived from the Hebrews, of one God, appeared far superior to the paying Divine honours to Mary, and the image-worship of corrupted Christianity. Smyrna was the residence of Polycarp, the disciple of St. John, who was the angel, or bishop, addressed in Rev. ii. 8—10, and was burned alive, A. D. 166. He then declared, "Eighty and six years have I served Christ, and he has never done me the least wrong; how, then, can I blaspheme my King and Saviour?" Further accounts of

this interesting city may be found in the journals of every modern eastern traveller; and in the pleasing accounts of the agents of Christian missions also in "The Visitor" for April, 1848, published by the Religious Tract Society.

Pergamos, now Bergamo, still contains three thousand professing Christians, in a population of five times that number. A humble shed answers the purpose of a church; while the splendid building named after St. John the divine remains in ruins: this city was founded B. C. 283. Being at the time referred to, Rev. ii. 12—17, a place of much opulence and celebrity, it was famous for the idolatry of the serpent, that prevalent species of devil-worship still common in the east. The members of this Christian church were exposed to severe temptations, by which some of them had been led astray; while others, more firm, had "resisted unto blood, striving against sin." Peculiar promises were held out for their encouragement; the "hidden manna," the "white stone," and the "new name" in it, were all selected by the Saviour as emblems of his love to them. Some have considered the latter as an allusion to the custom of balloting in judicial proceedings, when a white stone implied innocence—a black one, guilt; or it may refer to the stone on which the names of conquerors in games were formerly inscribed. But another meaning may also be assigned: the tessara, or oblong stone, which broken in half, and divided between two friends, was a sort of passport for the family of the one to the hospitality of the other. Thus the Saviour has promised to own those who are not ashamed of him: yet this precious promise is connected with an awful threatening against the careless and impenitent.

Thyatira is a city less strongly marked by the word of inspiration, and its present condition is less striking than that of others. It is still famous, as formerly, for dyeing scarlet or crimson cloths, which are every week sent to Smyrna. It contained, in 1826, about one thousand Turkish houses, there hundred inhabited by Greeks, and thirty by Armenians. The two latter have churches, but they are probably in the neglected condition that else-

where prevails. Thyatira is now known by the name of Ak-hissar, or White-castle.

Sardis, the capital of the ancient Lydian kings, was, in the age of the apostles, a distinguished and wealthy city. The Christians there, probably, were not outwardly poor like those of Smyrna; but they were not, like them, rich in faith—their works were not right before God. Some individuals were consistent believers even there; but, as a body, the people of Sardis seem not to have regained that healthy tone, the loss of which the apostle lamented. Among them, Julian the Apostate attempted to restore idolatry; and though his life was soon ended, the increasing corruptions of professing Christians made way for the incursions of the Turks. Fisk, the American missionary, in 1824, relates his efforts to give instruction there by reading to a few Greek slaves: see Rev. iii. 1—6, and Matt. xxv.

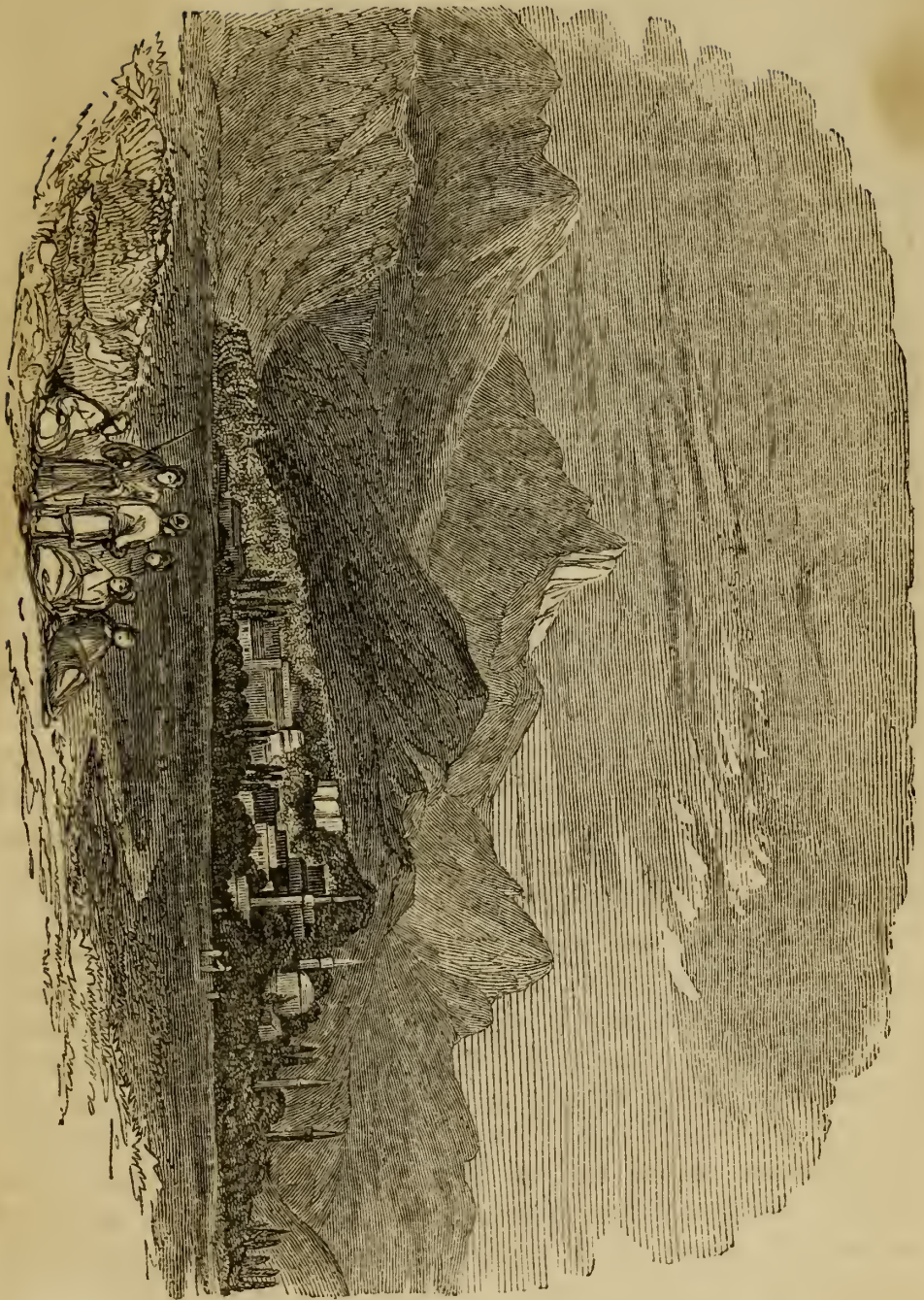
The description of Philadelphia is very interesting, especially when the words in Rev. iii. 7—13 are compared with the researches of modern travellers. It stands on a rising ground; and its inhabitants, in the fourteenth century, courageously withstood the Turks. It is generally allowed that this city has been blessed by God, though the particulars of its history are not fully known. Even Gibbon, the infidel historian, is a witness to its true condition. He says, “At a distance from the sea, forgotten by the emperors, encompassed on all sides by the Turks, her valiant citizens defended her religion and freedom above fourscore years, and at length capitulated with the proudest of the Ottomans. Among the Greek colonies and churches of Asia, Philadelphia is still erect—a column in a scene of ruins.” Little did the unbelieving writer, when he used this figure of speech, think of the promise made to this church, Rev. iii. 12: “Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God:”—neither do its Mohammedan neighbours, who now call it Allah-shiehr, that is, “the city of God,” at all intend to fulfil the words of Jesus. It is indeed a striking coincidence.

Mr. Hartley has given a full description of his visit. Divine service was read every Sunday in five churches, and once a year in twenty others of a smaller description.

The city of Laodicea, once a flourishing church—at least in its own esteem—is now a desolate ruin, never inhabited but when the black tent of the Turcoman is pitched there. The city has been repeatedly overthrown by earthquakes; but these are only the instruments of executing the Divine will. The words addressed to the Laodiceans, Rev. iii. 14—22, have been often commented on; but they will appear still more striking when viewed in connexion with its situation, on a volcanic hill, full of hot springs under ground, from which the nitrous vapours escape, and which occasion most destructive earthquakes. Yet this was once the seat of opulence and plenty: surely it is an impressive fact, that the churches which the apostle was directed to warn, with the faithfulness becoming a messenger of the Most High, were surrounded by circumstances of outward ease and luxury. Travellers, who have described the present loneliness of Laodicea, have also traced the ruins of an amphitheatre, which was probably a place of much temptation. The histories of the inhabitants are unknown to us; but if any were humbled and restored, by the gracious message sent to them, it must have been a peculiar instance of the power of sovereign grace, counteracting the influence of the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches.

The other churches existing during the first century, it is probable, also exhibited the variations of character here alluded to; and single Christians, in all ages, may find something in these chapters which will apply to themselves—ever remembering, that, while the dealings of God with individuals are among the secrets of his unsearchable wisdom, as public bodies can only exist in the present state of things, public sins will not fail to bring down public calamities: this the records of every country will prove.

Reader! the warnings and promises to the churches of Asia are also held out to you! To you the Saviour speaks, as to them of old, “I know thy works.” Your privileges



are equal to theirs; like them, you have the words of Moses and the prophets, of Christ and his apostles. Tremble, lest, like theirs, your sins should provoke the Lord to withdraw your candlestick, your gospel light and privileges. Seek to be numbered amongst those who overcome the world, the flesh, and the devil, by the blood of the Lamb, and the word of the testimony; then, whatever be your earthly course, you may, like St. Paul, confidently expect "the crown of righteousness," which the Lord will give to all them "that love his appearing."

A missionary stationed at Smyrna, who visited the sites of the seven apocalyptic churches, in 1844, describes their desolate and neglected state. He observes, respecting Philadelphia, now called Allah-shehr, (the city of God,) "We called on a Greek ecclesiastic; he asked us about the news of the day. For serious and religious conversation, there was no taste. I said that we had been reading the interesting epistle to the church of Philadelphia, Rev. iii. 7—13, but he seemed almost ignorant that there was such an epistle in the New Testament. There are about two-hundred Greek families, who mostly speak the Turkish language. The town itself is miserable; the streets narrow, badly paved, and dirty; in many places the bones of cattle lie scattered about—an emblem of the present state of the church of Philadelphia. 'Can these bones live?' Ezek. xxxvii. 3. I left with an acquaintance some of my Turkish books, as the New Testament, Psalter, Genesis, and a small number of elementary works, for distribution, which in his position will be easy, without being obtrusive. Were I to distribute books publicly it might easily excite a disturbance, and rather hinder future missionary efforts among the Turks than further them."

However, there is no doubt that Philadelphia has suffered, with other eastern churches, from the decayed and corrupted state of Christianity, which now preserves little more than its name. "Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof." The eastern churches were the first to receive the truth; the first to turn aside to the ways of sin and error, especially to the sin of

idolatry or creature-worship; and they were the first to fall a prey to their Mohammedan enemies, according to the prophecy contained in Rev. ix. At this time, the European or western churches, though deeply faulty, were not so grossly addicted to evil as those in the eastern empire. They were enabled to repel the same barbarous invaders; but, as bishop Newton shows, they did not improve the lesson which was thus afforded to them, Rev. ix. 20. 21: and what the issue may be, is hid from human eyes, though this last book of the Bible may truly be called a sacred history of the Christian church in its whole course. Still the balance seems trembling in the hands of the Discerner of all things; but have not we just cause to fear that even Protestant Europe will, when weighed in the balance, be found wanting?

It would be out of place to pursue this topic, or to enlarge upon the visions which John in the isle of Patmos was permitted to behold. In his lifetime, all the six first of the churches in Asia Minor seem to have numbered among their members some true believers, whose hearts were right in the sight of God. There is no doubt that such characters would derive much support and consolation from the prophecies contained in the Apocalypse; and a special blessing is promised to the attentive reader of its contents, Rev. i. 3; xxii. 7. Here we see that all earthly events are foreseen and directed by Him who doeth all things well; and though his way is in the sea, and his footsteps are not known, yet surely it shall be well now and for ever with the righteous. Here the sufferings of the martyrs were foretold, and the fulfilment of the whole book is becoming more and more clearly developed; so that we can trace the fulfilment of the Saviour's promise, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world," Matt. xxviii. 20.

DATES OF EVENTS OCCURRING IN THE LIFE OF THE APOSTLE PAUL.

SOME slight differences of opinion exist as to the chronology of these events. The opinions of four eminent writers—Tate, Townsend, Hales, and Greswell—are here given; with other tables, from “Tate’s continuous History of St. Paul,” on the following pages. No essential point is affected by the slight differences between these writers and the dates usually given in our Bibles. The dates of the Epistles are also here presented to view.

SCRIPTURE PROOFS.

	ACTS		Tate.		Townsend.		Hales.		Greswell.	
			A. D.		A. D.		A. D.		A. D.	
Gal. i.	ii.	The descent of the Holy Spirit .....	..		29		31		30	
	iii.	Peter and John imprisoned.....	..		30		32		32	
	v.	Ananias and Sapphira struck dead.....	..		31		32			
	v.	Pilate deposed from office in Judæa .....	..		..		35		36	
	vi.—viii.	Appointment of deacons—First persecution.....	..		34		35		37	
	ix.	Conversion of Saul—He goes to Arabia	35		35		35		37	
	ix.	The churches have a season of rest .....	..		37		37		37	
	ix.	Peter cures Æneas, and raises Tabitha .....	..		38		40			
	ix.	The Gospel of Matthew written .....	..		38		38			
	ix.	Saul returns to Damascus	36		38		38		38	
	ix.	Saul goes to Jerusalem, and then to Tarsus	38		39		38		41	
	x.	Conversion of Cornelius		40		41		41	

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Saul at Antioch.....
Dearth foretold by Agabus.....
Imprisonment of Peter—Death of Herod.....
Saul and Barnabas sent to the Gentiles from An-
tioch, the resort of Gentile converts.....
Paul returns to Antioch, and rebukes Peter.....
The council at Jerusalem.....
Paul and Silas proceed to Europe.....
The Epistle to the Galatians written.....
Paul at Athens—He goes to Corinth.....
He writes to the Thessalonians.....
Paul goes from Corinth to Jerusalem.....
Paul goes from Antioch to Galatia—He is at Ephe-
sus, and there writes I. Corinthians.....
Paul leaves Ephesus—Writes II. Corinthians.....
At Corinth he writes to the Romans.....
He goes up to Jerusalem, and is apprehended and
sent to Casarea.....
He is brought before Festus and Agrippa, and is
sent to Rome, and shipwrecked.....
Paul, at Rome, writes several Epistles.....
Paul seems to have left Rome.....
The Gospels of Mark and Luke written; also other
books, as the Acts, I. and II. Peter, and James..
Paul again taken to Rome, and beheaded.....

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xxvi. xxvii.
xxviii.

Gal. ii.

1 & 2 Thess.

1 Cor. xvi.

2 Cor. i.
Rom. xvi.

Eph. iii.
Phil. i.
Col. i.
Philemon

2 Tim. iv.

DATES OF EVENTS OCCURRING IN THE LIFE OF THE APOSTLE PAUL.

(FROM TATE'S CONTINUOUS HISTORY OF ST. PAUL.)

TABLE I.

A. D.	
35	The conversion of Saul. Saul afterwards at Damascus: his journey into Arabia, and return.
38	Escapes from Damascus. Saul at Jerusalem, thence to Tarsus. The Gospel preached out of Palestine, first to Jews, then to Gentile proselytes.
42	Barnabas brings Saul to Antioch for his coadjutor. Christians first so named in that city.
44	The dearth in Judæa: relief carried by Barnabas and Saul from Antioch.
45	From Antioch, the FIRST APOSTOLIC PROGRESS, of Barnabas and Saul, solemnly commissioned: To the isle of Cyprus, where Sergius Paulus, the first idolatrous Gentile, is converted: To Antioch in Pisidia, where Paul (now so called) preaches, And there the first great conversion of idolatrous Gentiles. From Antioch they flee to Iconium; thence to Lystra: The miraculous cure of the cripple there, and its consequences: Thence to Derbe, Through Pisidia to Pamphylia: and by Attalia back to Antioch in Syria, now the metropolis of Gentile Christianity.

TABLE II.

As preliminary to the Second Apostolic Progress, two important events may be considered and placed here:—

[48] The private journey of Paul and Barnabas with Titus:

A. D.

- To Jerusalem, followed by the rebuke of Peter at Antioch ;
- 49 The public mission of Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem, The Council held there, and the decree.
- 50 From Antioch, the SECOND APOSTOLIC PROGRESS : Paul, not now with Barnabas, but accompanied by Silas, Sets out, through Syria and Cilicia, to visit the churches : At Lystra joined by Timothy, through Phrygia and (the first time) Galatia. Onward to Troas, the first time ; there joined by Luke, they pass into Macedonia. At Philippi, the first time, cruelly treated ; but the foundation of a pure church miraculously laid at this place : To Thessalonica and Berea ; from Berea, Paul escapes by sea. Passes to Athens, his discourse there on Mars' Hill :
- 51 To Corinth the first time, meets with Aquila and Priscilla. Writes the Epistle to the Galatians. Overtaken there by Silas and Timothy, from Berea and Thessalonica. Writes the first and second Epistles to the Thessalonians. Is carried by the Jews before Gallio, who drives them away. From Corinth to Ephesus, the first time, a short stay there ; And visits Jerusalem in his way, before he returns.
- 53 From the second progress to Antioch.

TABLE III.

- From Antioch, the THIRD PROGRESS : Paul, now attended by Timothy, Erastus, and Titus, Revisits the churches of Galatia, the second time, and of Phrygia.
- 54 Then goes down to Ephesus the second time, Where he exercises the dispensation of miraculous gifts.

A. D.

56

Writes the first Epistle to the Corinthians : the occasion of it.

After the riot raised by Demetrius, he leaves Ephesus abruptly,

By Troas, second time, hastens to Philippi, the second time,

Where he overtakes Timothy, and meets with Titus, (whom he had sent, by different ways, to Corinth.)

Writes the second Epistle to the Corinthians.

From Philippi he goes over those parts as far as Illyricum,

57 And thence once more, now the second time, to Corinth :

From that city, writes the Epistle to the Romans.

On his return, he chooses to take the route through Macedonia,

At Philippi, the third time, and so by Troas the third time.

At Miletus, has the Elders from Ephesus to meet him ; Thence to Cæsarea, and, though solemnly warned of his danger,

58 He goes up to Jerusalem, where his third Progress is abruptly terminated by Persecution of the Jews.

TABLE IV.

The great JEWISH PERSECUTION (to the end of Acts) Begins at Jerusalem, where Paul is violently apprehended in the Temple. Proceedings there before the chief captain Lysias : before the Chief Priests.

He is carried away to Cæsarea for safety ; on his trial there before Felix, accused by the Jews :

Felix (with Drusilla) hears him concerning the faith in Christ.

Festus, after two years, succeeds to Felix.

Paul, to protect himself from treachery, appeals to Cæsar :

And before Agrippa (and Bernice) delivers that wonderful speech, Acts xxvi.

- A. D.
- 60 He is sent off to Rome, with Luke and Aristarchus as his companions :
The voyage till they reach Crete ; the danger
- 61 Then foreseen and foretold, and the shipwreck at Malta.
Paul and the viper—he miraculously also heals the father of Publius.
After three months they set sail, and touch at Syracuse.
At Puteoli, where they land, brethren are found.
Afterwards is met by brethren from Rome ; and, on arriving there, declares to the Jews the cause of his coming.
During the two years in that city, visited or attended by various friends,
- 62 He writes Epistles to the Ephesians, and Colossians, and to Philemon.
Luke probably left him before he wrote the Epistle to the Philippians.
Soon after that, came his liberation from the first imprisonment at Rome.
N. B.—His Epistle to the Hebrews was probably written soon after this time.

TABLE V.

- 63 Last Progress from Rome to Rome again, ending in the second imprisonment and martyrdom there.
Paul, intending to visit Asia first, and afterwards Macedonia,
Takes with him Titus and Timothy :
The one he stations in Crete ; the other he leaves at Ephesus,
Now visited by him for the third time.
He himself, by way of Troas, visits Philippi, both for the fourth time.
From Philippi, he writes to Timothy the first Epistle, and
Before setting out to the north-west parts, he writes the Epistle to Titus, and summons him to Nicopolis, as the place where he means to winter.

A.D.

After accomplishing these plans, Paul on his return takes Corinth, now visited for the third time; passes over to Ephesus, the fourth time visited; leaves Trophimus sick at Miletus; and soon after arrives in Rome.

There he is again apprehended: during his imprisonment writes the sacred legacy of his last farewell, the second Epistle to Timothy,
And at Rome Paul suffers martyrdom.

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or 66]

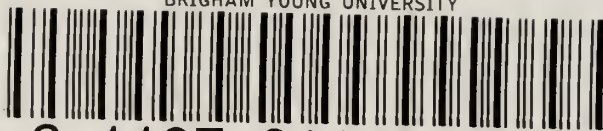
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